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www.kentnews.co.uk February 12, 2017

North & West edition No 751

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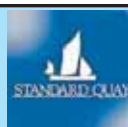
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# Kent on Sunday

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## Why we're forgetting all that makes Britain great

CREATING a great nation is not normally built on those born and bred in the country in question.

Look at the US and, as it's closest to us, New York as an example. That is a city made rich in culture and vibrancy by the overseas roots of those who moved there and made it their home - sold on the American dream.

And the same applies to the UK. London is a melting pot of cultures and peoples which makes it such a compelling and exciting place to be.

Kent has, to a far lesser extent, seen changes in its demographic make-up too. But similar to how foreigners were once perceived in London, now it is only too easy to consider any non-British person with suspicion or revulsion and put the blame of everything at their feet. Why? Because it's easy and it shifts the blame for any failing in society or government onto somebody else.

But Britain's strength - and the US' for that matter - has always been its welcome to non-natives. It has not, as some would have you believe, led us to rack and ruin. In fact, we become a beacon of hope and compassion. The impact of a global economic nosedive 10 years ago is still being felt and while easier to blame rising immigration, it is only part of the equation.

More worrying though, is the decision to end to our country's commitment to taking in 3,000 lone Syrian children. It is as if we have finally lost all sense that we are all human, all flesh and blood, regardless of race and creed. Imagine, for a moment if the situation was reversed, and someone failed to give our future generations safe haven. It would breed resentment to last for years. Britain is better than this. Much better. But we are beginning to risk it all with our actions.

**Editor Chris Britcher**

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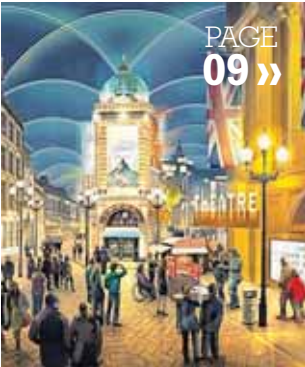
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## Bishop 'deeply worried' as refugee scheme shut

By Tom Pyman

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THE Bishop of Dover has joined a chorus of protest over the government's decision to close a scheme for unaccompanied children.

It was announced this week that the number of children who will be allowed into the UK under the scheme, introduced last year under the so-called Dubs Amendment, would be limited to just 350.

In a statement, the Rt Rev Trevor Willmott said: "While commending the steps that have already been taken by government under the Dubs amendment, it is deeply worrying to learn that this vital effort is to be curtailed.

"Now is not the time to step back from our responsibility towards the vulnerable children so desperately in need of our care and protection.

"Through the work we are engaged with here in Kent we are acutely aware of the challenges, but also of the life-changing impact that our country's offer of safety, stability and compassion brings to the children and families who have been resettled here in our communities.



**CONCERNED:** Trevor Willmott, the Bishop of Dover. Picture: ADY KERRY

"I would urge us not to lose sight of our shared humanity with those fleeing intolerable conflict and danger, but to continue to reach out to them as fellow brothers and sisters."

It followed criticism from the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who said he was "saddened and shocked" at the decision.

He added that he had believed ministers were "committed to welcoming up to 3,000 children

under this scheme" and it was "regrettable" that such a small proportion have been given sanctuary in Britain.

However, prime minister Theresa May has since defended the government's approach.

Speaking at Downing Street following talks with Italian prime minister Paolo Gentiloni, Mrs May said the Dubs scheme was only one of a number of routes by which vulnerable children from war-torn

Syria can find sanctuary in the UK.

"We have been seeing quite a number of children and families being resettled here in the United Kingdom," she said.

"I think what we are doing in terms of refugees is absolutely right, on top of course of the significant financial support and humanitarian aid we are giving to refugees in the region of Syria - a commitment of £2.3 billion, the second biggest bilateral donor."

## Minister vows action soon on 'crack cocaine of gambling' machines

A RECOMMENDATION on the future of controversial betting machines on which gamblers can lose as much as £300 every minute is expected soon, a government minister has said.

Campaigners across Kent and beyond have battled to reduce the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2 and Labour MPs again raised the issue in the House of Commons this week.

The machines have been dubbed "the crack cocaine of gambling" and even the co-founder of the UK's biggest bookmaker, Paddy Power, described them as "dangerously addictive".

Medway has been a particular problem area over the years, which led to the unitary council introducing a pioneering cross-operator self-exclusion scheme, since replicated by a number of local authorities nationwide.

Leader of the Labour group on Medway council, Vince Maple, told us last year he felt it was "almost

impossible" for the government not to take further action against FOBTs.

Responding to questions in the Commons, Chatham and Aylesford MP, and parliamentary under-secretary for culture, media and sport, Tracey Crouch told the house: "The government announced a review of gaming machines which include FOBTs on October 24, 2016.

"I am currently considering the findings of that and I will be publishing my recommendation shortly."

The review will assess concerns about the harm FOBTs can cause either to players or the communities in which they are located, as well as other rules on gaming machines across the industry.

According to figures made available by campaign group Stop the FOBTs, as of last summer, there were 645 FOBTs across Kent and Medway, in which a total of £172.5m had been inserted, with punters cumulatively losing some £34.5m.

## Police confirm body in river was that of Ben Savage, 18

FAMILY of missing teenager Ben Savage say they are "heartbroken" after it was confirmed his body was that recovered in the River Medway earlier this month.

The 18-year-old from Rochester was last seen around Sun Pier in Chatham in the early hours of December 6 after a night out. It had always been feared he had fallen in the river and drowned.

Police confirmed there were no suspicious circumstances and police are preparing a report for the coroner. Mr Savage's family said in a statement: "This is a heart breaking time for everyone and so we, Ben's family, now ask for some time and space to grieve.

"Funeral details will be shared, once confirmed, for us all to celebrate Ben's life together."

## Snow may linger next week but it should get warmer

BRACE yourself for a chilly weekend and start to the week - with possible Valentine's Day snow showers - but the good news is that temperatures are set to rise by Wednesday.

Some parts of the county saw flurries of wintry showers on Friday as cold winds brought in freezing conditions again, prompting fears of another prolonged spell of cold

weather.

But the Met Office says while temperatures will struggle to get any higher than five degrees this weekend - and feel as cold as minus four for much of the week in the wind - by Wednesday it should be brightening up with temperatures bouncing back into double figures although remaining cold at night.



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## Lakes to get £150,000 investment in water

COUNCIL chiefs in Ashford are to invest up to £150,000 to improve the quality of water at the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park after it was hit by potentially harmful developments of blue-green algae and invasive aquatic weed - both naturally occurring phenomena.

The lakes within the country park have proven

especially popular with a range of activities regularly taking place on the main lake, including triathlons, sailing, rowing and kayaking.

Jessamy Blanford, portfolio holder for parks and open spaces, said: "It was disappointing last summer we had to cancel several events so it is essential for the council to take steps to resolve these problems."



**COURSE:** How it will look

## Dreamland to expand as it secures £15m ahead of expected sale this year

**By Emily King**

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OPERATORS of Margate's Dreamland leisure complex say they have secured investment of up to £15million - allowing it to buy further land and invest in the site.

However, the announcement this week is thought to have included the £10m KoS reported in January it had received - money designed to improve the park ahead of a likely sale later this year.

Sands Heritage Ltd, which operates the site, went into administration last year after racking up millions in debt following the park's re-opening. Administrators have, since then, sought to restructure the business to ensure it survives, with a view to selling it. The lease on the land insists it remains a theme park.

The new investment is being provided by Cayman Island-based Arrowgrass Capital Partners, a significant existing Dreamland creditor that supports the management



**GROWTH:** Dreamland has struggled

team's strategy to build a strong business for the local economy.

Sands Heritage said the injection of funds supports improvements such as the acquisition of new park rides and the restoration of existing

ones, as well as upgrades to Dreamland's indoor and outdoor event spaces. That could mean more festivals and outdoor shows.

It will also allow it to expand the site, acquiring neighbouring properties and land near the park.

Chris Wells, leader of Thanet District Council, said: "It's positive to see significant private investment going into Dreamland to help secure its financial future. The rebirth of Dreamland would not have been possible without the extensive commitment and financial backing of public organisations, of which the council is proud to have been a part. I'm excited to see the park continue its contribution to the significant regeneration of our original seaside resort."

Sir Roger Gale, MP for Thanet North, added: "The park and undercover facilities are a vital ingredient of Margate's year-round offer to leisure and business and I continue to have great confidence in Dreamland's prospect as a major leisure complex."

## Roadworks to impact on hospital traffic

MAJOR road works near Maidstone Hospital will take place this week, with motorists and hospital visitors warned there could be delays.

Hermitage Lane will see the existing four-way traffic lights at the junctions with Heath Road, St Andrew's Road and Fountain Lane extended a further 20 metres from their usual site to allow for work by South East Water to be carried out safely.

The work will take place from Monday to Friday. South East Water's delivery manager Chris Love said: "We know this is a very busy stretch of road and that's why we have worked with the highways authority to plan this work in the school holiday when there is less traffic. However, as this is also a main route to Maidstone Hospital we are advising patients with appointments and visitors to allow extra time for their journeys."

"We have also told the hospital and South East Coast Ambulance Service about the temporary changes to the traffic lights and its possible impact."

## Probe after dead dog found burnt on beach

THE RSPCA is investigating after the burnt remains of a dog were found on Whitstable beach.

The discovery was made near Preston Parade, Seasalter, on Tuesday morning.

The dog had been a male, young, possibly black-and-white, Jack Russell terrier, and his body was injured and showed signs of being set on fire and burnt. He was not microchipped.

RSPCA inspector Ellie Burt said: "There were clear signs this poor dog had been set on fire - either before or after his death."

"It is also possible that the wounds could indicate an injury just before death, and then he may have been set on fire to dispose of the body."

"There was little evidence of a fire nearby, or that the dog had been in the water and washed up, so I think it likely that he died elsewhere and then his body was dumped on the beach, by the sea."

Anyone with any information should contact 0300 123 8018.

## College welcomes construction job rise

THERE will be more construction roles in Kent and the south east than ever before following an industry boom, a report claims.

Some 20,000 new construction workers will be needed in the region over the next five years, according to new figures from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

The CITB's annual Construction Skills Network report forecasts an average annual requirement of 3,940 new recruits in the south east until 2021, more than double the number forecast in last year's report.

The report was welcomed by East Kent College principal Graham Razey, who said it highlighted the importance of construction skills in the county.

He told KoS: "In order to make sure our curriculum matches local skills needs - and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's priorities - we are currently in the process of expanding and enhancing construction facilities at our Folkestone campus."

"This will help ensure the local economy and construction trades continue to flourish in the future."



# Investigation after 'cannibal' cop killer found dead in cell

By Emily King

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CANNIBAL killer Stefano Brizzi, who strangled a police officer from Greenwich during a bondage sex session and then cooked and tried to eat him, has died in prison.

Brizzi, 50, was jailed at the Old Bailey for a minimum of 24 years in December for the murder of 59-year-old Gordon Semple at his flat in south London.

He died at HMP Belmarsh, the high security jail in Woolwich, south east London.

A Prison Service spokeswoman said: "HMP Belmarsh prisoner Stefano Brizzi died in custody on Sunday.

"As with all deaths in custody there will be an independent investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman."

Brizzi was arrested after police called to his flat to investigate a foul stench discovered the gruesome scene.

During his trial, the Italian admitted he was inspired by his favourite TV series Breaking Bad as he tried to get away with the killing by dissolving his victim's flesh in an acid bath.

But the crystal meth addicted former Morgan Stanley IT developer denied he had cooked and tried to eat parts of the body with chopsticks, saying he had no memory of it.



**DEAD:** Stefano Brizzi was found dead in his cell last weekend

Brizzi was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life with a minimum of 24 years, with seven years concurrent for disposing of the body. The court heard evidence from an odontologist settled the matter of whether Brizzi had in fact cannibalised part of his victim.

On examining a rib discarded in the kitchen bin, the expert found that a bite mark did in fact match the defendant's lower teeth.

Brizzi, who met his victim on gay dating app Grindr, reportedly took his own life.

Figures released last month showed that

suicides, assaults and self-harm behind bars have all surged to record levels, with 354 deaths in prisons in England and Wales last year, including 119 which were apparently self-inflicted.

Self-harm incidents jumped by nearly a quarter, while there were more than 25,000 assaults in the 12 months to September - equivalent to nearly 70 attacks every day. The figures triggered new calls for reform of the prison system amid claims that jails are dangerously over-crowded.

## Horse left to rot in a field results in ban

FOUR people have been banned from keeping horses for a number of years after leaving one to rot alongside seven live animals.

Harry Dunn, Tommy Tucker Dunn, Matthew Dunn, all of South Ash Road in Sevenoaks and Christine Chambers of Porchester Close, Hartley were all found guilty of offences under the animal welfare act and sentenced at Sevenoaks Magistrates' Court this week.

## Six treated following blaze in Birchington

AN investigation is under way following a blaze in a block of flats in Birchington just before 6am on Wednesday morning which left six people needing treatment for smoke inhalation.

The fire in the five-storey building at McKinlay Court saw the building evacuated and extensive damage to one flat and damage to two others.

## Car park rapist jailed

A MAN who raped a woman over 26 years ago has finally faced justice following a cold case review.

John Clayton, 60, of Upper Fant Road, Maidstone, was convicted at Maidstone Crown Court, after a jury found him guilty of the rape, false imprisonment and indecent assault of a woman in a multi-story carpark in Gravesend in July 1990.

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# Home secretary praises the county for refugee crisis care

KENT has been praised for its response to the refugee crisis by the home secretary.

Responding to Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately in a debate about unaccompanied child asylum seekers in the Commons, Amber Rudd said Britain was "so fortunate" the county has responded to the crisis with such positivity.

Mrs Whately told MPs: "In Kent we look after over a thousand unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Does [Ms Rudd] agree when we welcome vulnerable children to the UK, we must make sure we can give them a genuine welcome, that councils have the resources and capacity to look after them as well as the British children in need of care?"

In response, the home secretary



said: "The fact is we are so fortunate that Kent does step up because they so often take the brunt and have to take the largest number of unaccompanied children.

"We do need other councils to

engage so we can spread that responsibility around. We need to have care, time, money, professional support to look after these refugees because they are children, and need to be looked after."

## All our MPs back PM to push ahead with Brexit

ALL of Kent's MPs have given Theresa May their backing to formally begin Brexit in a historic House of Commons vote on Wednesday night.

The European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill was approved after around 40 hours of debate during which the government saw off a series of attempts to change it to safeguard against a "hard Brexit".

The legislation will allow the prime minister to begin exit negotiations under Article 50 of the EU treaties, which she has promised by April, once it passes through the House of Lords.

Kent MPs who voted to Remain, such as Helen Whately, Tom Tugendhat, Kelly Tolhurst, Charlie Elphicke and Damian Collins all stuck by their vows to respect the wishes

of their constituents, and the wider British population, and voted to trigger Article 50. As did Tunbridge Wells' MP Greg Clark who has faced controversy with the only constituency in the county who voted to Remain during the referendum.

Brexit secretary David Davis said: "We've seen a historic vote tonight - a big majority for getting on with negotiating our exit from the EU and a strong, new partnership with its member states.

Former Ukip leader Nigel Farage said: "I never thought I'd see the day where the House of Commons overwhelmingly voted for Britain to leave the EU."

The Liberal Democrats have vowed to continue to push for a second referendum on the final exit deal.

## Lidl gets store go-ahead

SUPERMARKET chain Lidl has been given the go-ahead for a new store in Whitfield, Dover, after securing planning permission from the council.

The store will open later this year and create 40 new jobs and come with 159 car parking spaces.

## Council buys office block

SEVENOAKS council has splashed out £4.1million to buy a shop and office complex as part of its drive to remain financially self-sufficient.

The three-storey property at 96 High Street, Sevenoaks, says it will provide revenue streams with potential to expand.

## Marsh trickster warning

POLICE are reminding householders to be vigilant after reports distraction burglars are operating in the Romney Marsh area.

On Wednesday a man, claiming to be from the water board, knocked on a house in St Mary's Bay. Police say he was a trickster and urge others to be alert.

## Medical centre to be built

TONBRIDGE council has agreed to sell land and buildings in River Lawn Road and River Walk to make way for new homes and a medical centre.

Tonbridge Medical Group, currently in Pembury Road and Higham Lane, will move to the site once construction is complete.

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# Paramount still on track

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

**B**OSSES behind the proposed multi-billion pound London Paramount park entertainment resort insist they will still receive investment from a Chinese firm exposed as a "shell company".

Reports in the Sunday Times last week revealed Chinese businessman Peter Zhang and his investment outfit SinoFortone, who claimed to have committed billions of pounds to major UK projects, including the ambitious plans for the Swanscombe peninsula, had only successfully delivered on one deal so far - a pub.

The firm was dismissed in the press as a shell company - a non-trading business used as a vehicle for various financial manoeuvres or kept dormant for future use in some other capacity.

The development - which proposes to include a theme park, live music venues, cinemas, restaurants and hotels - is set to cost £3.2 billion and could create around 27,000 jobs.

It was announced at the end of 2015 that the project had attracted an initial £100m investment from SinoFortone, which bosses said at the time demonstrated what a "unique economic and regenerative opportunity" the park represented.



**PLANS:** The highly ambitious project says it is still expecting £100m funding pledged by Chinese investors

Claims an investment deal fell apart when China's state export credit agency refused to provide a loan to SinoFortone due to the lack of Chinese engineers and technology involved in the planning process for the theme park were emphatically quashed by project bosses.

KoS understands not a penny of the £100m was expected up front, and

that SinoFortone will deliver on its pledge following the submission of a planning application later this year.

Andy March, a spokesman for London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH), the firm behind the park, said: "SinoFortone publicly announced their intention to invest in October 2015 and that commitment is unchanged.

"We're still working hard behind the scenes, developing our business plan and preparing our planning application for submission later this year.

"It's no secret that this has taken longer than we would have liked, but this is a huge project and we're determined to get it right. We'll be sharing more news soon and look forward to updating everyone on the project."

## Builder jailed in fraud case

A ROGUE builder from Borough Green has been jailed for two years after banking thousands of pounds from customers for work he never carried out.

Further investigations also revealed that Rob Folgate, 31 formerly of Annetts Hall, had set up a ticketing scam for major concerts and sporting events including the FA Cup and Wimbledon.

Ron Folgate was sentenced to two years in prison and also ordered to pay compensation of up to £45,000 after a series of frauds between 2012 and 2015.

## MP attends 107th birthday

GILLINGHAM and Rainham MP Rehman Chishti this week visited his "oldest constituent" as she celebrated her 107-year-old birthday.

Victoria Middlemiss, who was born in 1910, received a bouquet of flowers from Mr Chishti at the Abbeyfield Kent Society home in Wigmore where she is a resident.

"It was great to meet Victoria and wish her a happy 107th birthday," the Conservative said afterwards.

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**DEBATE:** Members of the council met this week to rubber stamp an increase in council tax and highlight again the strain local authorities are under due to funding reductions

# ‘High risk’ budget approved as council tax increase confirmed

**Tom Pyman** watches the debate at County Hall, in Maidstone, as opponents of the ruling Tory group say KCC should have followed Surrey in threatening a referendum to get its own ‘sweetheart’ deal

**A** REFERENDUM to increase council tax beyond a capped amount should have been called by Kent County Council to force central government into a “sweetheart deal” and ease the growing cash crisis, the authority’s Labour opposition leader has suggested.

Gordon Cowan made the remarks at County Hall on Thursday as councillors approved the local authority’s budget for the coming year, which includes a rise in council tax of just under four per cent.

It comes after nearby Surrey County Council announced earlier this year it was proposing a whopping 15 per cent council tax hike, which would have to be assessed by residents in a referendum.

Town halls can currently increase tax by around five per cent a year - comprising of up to three per cent which will be used specifically for social care, and a further 1.99 per cent for all the council’s services - without launching a public vote.

Bosses at the Conservative-controlled Surrey council then caused a stir earlier this week when they backtracked on the proposed 15 per cent rise, instead suggesting bills will go up by 4.99 per cent instead - below the referendum threshold.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn confronted Theresa May at Prime Minis-

ter’s Questions with a series of leaked text messages from Surrey’s leader which, he suggested, revealed negotiations on funding with Whitehall in order to “kill” the double-digit tax rise to pay for social care.

Surrey chief David Hodge insisted there had been no deal with the government but said he was confident that ministers now understood the “real pressures” facing councils over social care, while Mrs May accused Mr Corbyn and the Labour party of using “alternative facts”.

Bringing the debate to County Hall, Cllr Cowan accused Conservative council leader Paul Carter of not lobbying hard enough to secure a better deal for Kent, agreeing with his party leader that the government would face embarrassment seeing such a rise in the home of senior cabinet members.

Cllr Cowan told councillors: “We haven’t threatened a referendum”, councillor Carter said - well, perhaps we should have done.

“But then again you haven’t got [chancellor] Philip Hammond and [health secretary] Jeremy Hunt in the constituency.

“‘We’ve lobbied government’, [KCC’s deputy leader and finance chief, John] Simmonds said, but we didn’t lobby them as hard as Surrey because it is a sweetheart deal that they’ve got.

“Quite frankly, they’ve stuffed us up again.”

Leader of the opposition, Ukipp’s Roger Latchford also outlined concerns.

“It must be clear to us all that any reductions we can make to the general public are clearly beneficial,” he said.

“Continued hikes in taxation from whatever source are having a serious impact on those families that are finding it increasingly harder to manage.

“Mrs May has also referred to the JAMs [those ‘just about managing’] and we should accept the reality that these cuts are truly biting on those that can least afford it.

“We have a high risk budget and everything that can be done must be done to alert central government that Kent has major difficulties due to Conservative policies.”

Cllr Carter told councillors he was not aware any such deal with Surrey actually existed, but insisted he had continued to pile pressure on central government nevertheless.

The budget proposals went to public consultation back in October, where senior bosses told KoS up to 400 jobs could go as the council looked to slash £108m.

With funding in the form of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) being slowly reduced year-on-year until it dries up completely in 2020, councils are having to become self-sufficient and KCC’s finance chiefs warned the future could look “absolutely disastrous for local government” if town halls don’t

receive more help from Westminster.

Despite the tough economic climate, Cllr Carter has repeatedly expressed his pride that frontline services have been protected in recent years.

“This is a high risk budget, but we’ve got an extraordinary track record of delivering transformations and savings in difficult times year-on-year-on-year,” the leader said.

“We haven’t moaned and we haven’t whinged, we haven’t threatened referenda, we haven’t threatened massive council tax increases.

“We have not slashed and burned services, we have not closed any libraries, we have not closed any children’s centres, we have not culled the non-statutory services that are so greatly valued by our residents across the county.

“We’ve just got on with the job. We’ve kept the council tax as low as possible.

“We have proved conclusively, despite the sceptics, that you can spend less money but at the same time deliver and maintain improved frontline services to our residents.

“We have minimised compulsory redundancies and supported our staff with appropriate pay and reward policies that have seen the pay and reward envelope grow for our staff by an average of 2.5 per cent every year over the last five years, not enjoyed by the members of this authority.”

While it is the 12 local district or borough authorities that collect the council tax, there are a number of public bodies which receive a slice of the pie, to help pay for the local services residents receive.

KCC takes the largest proportion - around 71 per cent - to pay for services including schools, social care, public health, community safety and transport.

The second-tier councils also keep some tax - around 11 per cent - and they are responsible for services such as planning applications, rubbish collection and housing.

Kent Police receives 10 per cent of the total tax bill, Kent Fire and Rescue Service get around 4.5 per cent and the rest is swallowed up by town and parish councils.

The four per cent KCC hike means the average band D property will pay around £45 extra a year, while police and crime commissioner Matthew Scott gave the green light earlier this month to a £5 rise in the force’s precept.

In total, residents can expect to pay around £55 more per year for council tax, equating to just over £1 a week.

Council chiefs in Medway - a unitary authority separate from KCC - are proposing the maximum rise of 4.99 per cent, and will look to rubber-stamp the budget when councillors meet later this month.

# Speed traps go digital to make our roads safer

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

**S**PEED cameras across Kent are set for a multi-million pound upgrade meaning all offences will now be caught and immediately sent to the police.

Currently, the cameras in the county rely on traditional film - which means once that has run out, anyone else flashed as they go past escape punishment.

But now they are entering the digital age with each snap of a speeding driver instantly being transmitted, in digital form, to the authorities via mobile phone networks.

A trial scheme is currently being rolled out at select locations in the county and if they prove a success, it will go Kent-wide.

While welcomed by many as an effective deterrent at accident blackspots, they have been criticised in the past for simply being an additional revenue stream and for 'punishing' the motorist.

The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership, an organisation formed by Kent County Council (KCC), Medway Council, Highways England and Kent Police in 2002, manages the camera network.

Its aim is to reduce casualties on our roads and educate drivers of the perils of speed.

A pilot of the installation processes is currently being conducted in Val-

“Cameras are only installed where there is a history of speed-related casualties, this new technology will help us continue to contribute to road casualty reduction across the county”

ley Drive in Gravesend, Frindsbury Hill in Medway, and Loose Road in Maidstone.

These sites will be tested and commissioned before a general roll out across the rest of the county will take place over the next few years.

Police inspector Sam Pearson explained: “The wet film cameras and equipment that the digital upgrade replaces is all coming to the end of its working life, many of the older safety cameras in Kent have been in place for over 20 years and although still in operation, they are ready for this upgrade to the very latest digital technology.

“Cameras are only installed where there is a history of speed related casualties, this new technology will help us continue to contribute to road casualty reduction across the county.”

KCC casualty reduction manager,



**CHANGES:** Maidstone, Gravesend and Medway will see changes in the first pilot stage of the upgrades

Steve Horton, added: “Safety cameras play an important part in helping to reduce road casualties in Kent by encouraging road users to moderate their behaviour and stay below the speed limit.

“Together with KCC's engineering measures and education campaigns, the new digital cameras will offer a robust enforcement element to our commitment to casualty reduction.”

And Medway Council portfolio holder for frontline services, Phil Filmer, added: “Speed cameras, as well as red light and average speed

cameras, help to ensure motorists drive safely. The new digital cameras are being installed to support the partnership's work in helping to reduce the number of casualties on our roads.”

However, Ian Taylor, a Kent spokesperson for the Alliance of British Drivers, said motorists would be hammered unfairly once again.

He said: “It doesn't really matter what type of camera is in place as they are automatic and only record speed, not whether someone is a good or bad driver.

“The problem with speed cameras

is that there's a false belief that they're the be all and end all of road safety. Results over the years have been patchy, and the speed limit is usually just decided by politicians who listen to local groups campaigning for lower speed limits without any real expert knowledge.”

Motoring lawyer Nick Freeman, who dubs himself Mr Loophole for his ability to navigate through the legal minefield for motorists, believes the cameras have just one purpose: Money.

He explains: “A quarter of a century ago, speed cameras were introduced as a noble cause to reduce accidents at notorious blackspots.

“However, they were soon hijacked by greedy councils who quickly appreciated their true worth, namely the ability to raise huge sums of money from the unsuspecting motorist.

“Over the last 25 years we have witnessed them being unravelled the length and breadth of the county.

“Whilst it is commendable to make our roads safer and reduce accidents, this should never be at the expense or alternative to trained police officers, in marked cars, patrolling our roads.

“This reliance on robotical policing by static cameras has resulted in a litany of other driving offences, such as drink and drug driving and the illegal use of mobile phones, going largely undetected by absent police officers.

“The truth is police forces and local authorities have sold their soul for money.”

## FACTFILE

### Have casualties been reduced at speed camera sites?

Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership says that overall, there has been a reduction in crashes and casualties across the county since speed cameras have been introduced at various sites.

In Valley Drive in Gravesend, for example, there were nine people killed or seriously injured in a 36 month period prior to the speed camera installation in 2004. The number reduced to just six casualties in the most recent 36 month period between 2013 and 2015.

Elsewhere in other locations where the new digital cameras are being piloted, there has also been a reduction in casualties.

On the A229 Loose Road in Maidstone where there are two

cameras in both directions, there were nine casualties in the 36 month period before the cameras were installed compared to four in most recent period.

In Frindsbury Hill in Rochester, there was one recorded incident of somebody being killed or seriously injured in a three-year period prior to the camera's installation in 1996. In the most recent 36 month period between 2013 and 2015, there was none.

Casualties have dramatically decreased since cameras were installed on Northdown Hill and Green Lane in Broadstairs. In the 36 month period before cameras were installed in 2005, there were 14 people either seriously injured or killed. However, this number has reduced to just two between 2013 and 2015.

### Where are the speeding ticket hotspots in Kent?

More than 10,000 offences were recorded on the M25 clockwise between Junction five, the turn off for Sevenoaks and the M26, and Clackett Lane Services during 2015.

Cameras on the A264 Pembury Road in Tunbridge Wells, along with the A259 Sandgate Esplanade, the A229 Maidstone Road in Chatham and the A28 Pinn Hill in Canterbury recorded between 1,000 to 4,999 offences at each site in 2015.

The latest figures from 2015 show how cameras across the entire Kent road network, including Medway and Highways England roads, detected 49,138 offences. This is down from 56,581 in 2014.

### How much money do the cameras make?

If you have been caught on camera either for speeding, you will have the chance to pay a £100 fixed penalty fine and have your licence endorsed with three penalty points instead of going to court.

If you receive a speeding ticket within a certain speed limit threshold you may be given the opportunity of attending a national speed awareness course which costs £85. This is an alternative to receiving points on your licence and a £100 fine. The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership says it does not have a breakdown of how many attended speed awareness course, how many accepted the conditional offer of a fine and points, and how many elected to go to court or what the outcome was.



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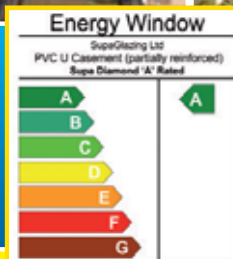
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KL 1/16



# W a m robber turned life around to help hundreds

We meet Joe Baden who transformed his life from one of crime to education, and for years has helped others follow the same path. After being awarded an OBE he reflects on how he's assisting ex-convicts to turn their lives around

**By Emily King**

[Emily.King@archant.co.uk](mailto:Emily.King@archant.co.uk)

**E**X-CONVICTS are still being stigmatised by a government that is pushing them into "low level labour jobs", explains the founder of an organisation set up to get former prisoners through university and contributing back to society.

The claim comes from Joe Baden, 55, a former armed robber who managed to turn his life around after being caught, and now looks to unlock the potential of those who have served time through a solid education.

His success was underlined in the New Year's Honours List when he was presented with an OBE for his services to higher education.

After spending time in maximum security Belmarsh Prison in south east London while on remand, he turned his life around by going to university, getting a degree and then, in 2003, starting up Open Book after becoming disillusioned by only being offered manual labour courses.

Now well established, it provides courses, drop-in classes and support for hundreds of students of all ages and background by making it clear to them the benefits of higher education.

Sitting in his Chatham offices with KoS, he explained: "Open Book and education give people the opportunity to be their true self."

"You have to remember that whatever their background, some people just never had the opportunity to get a good education. Loads of these people that come to us are the most honest and most intelligent people you will ever meet, but at one point or another they went wrong or things didn't work out. Education is a great way to get them back on track and to show them that life is worth living. You have to have a purpose in life - it shouldn't be about existing just for the sake of existing."

And he says the government should be doing more to help get young lives back on track.

He explains: "There's always a lot of talk about getting kids from council estates into low level labour jobs."

"I mean, government are spending £100,000 on retail courses. We're subsidising the government to put people through these courses when in reality you go and work in retail for a week and then you know what you're doing. What can these courses possibly be teaching? Are we really telling these people

that this is all they can aspire to?

"The reality is that they're probably going to have to go get a job in London anyway, which is going to cost them £30-a-day in travel, when they're only being paid £40-a-day. I spoke to a couple of lads who had been sacked because they couldn't afford to get to their zero-hour contract job in London. And then also because of this they had their benefits stopped. What are they meant to do? It's no wonder everyone is selling weed nowadays. They need the money to live on."

Mr Baden knows of what he speaks, having spent a "destructive" childhood in Bermondsey, east London, which led him into a life of crime.

"From very early on," he explains in his Cockney accent, "I was the most destructive person in the world, and I feel like now I'm almost paying penance for who I was before. I'm trying to do more good than I've done harm."

After a stint in Belmarsh prison on remand for armed robbery in his thirties, he was fortunate enough to have his charges dropped because a witness could not pick him out of a suspect line up. He received a two-year community order, instead of the 10 years behind bars he faced.

"Boredom was the worst thing about being in prison," he reflects. "There's a real mental strain caused by being confined to a cell. But that isn't what made me turn my life around. That was my wife, she wouldn't put up with anything like that again. And to be honest I was really worried because I'd already lost the rest of my family - I was married before," Mr Baden explains.

While on community service, Mr Baden went back to education, something he says he did to "appease my probation officer". But after developing a love for history, he decided to apply to study at Goldsmiths University in London, a decision that laid a path for the rest of his life.

"I had my very last drink the day of my interview for Goldsmiths," he says. "Once I became a student, I stopped succumbing to my vices, and became the real me. I was in a bad way for a long time, I was drink and drugs dependent, and I didn't realise how much I did need them until I stopped taking them."

"Education made me realise that I can't change the things I've already done but I can try to make amends and overall do more good than I have done bad."

He graduated from Goldsmiths in 1998 with





**REFLECTIONS:** Joe Baden at his offices in Chatham tells us how he believes education is the key to success. All pictures: ADY KERRY

a BA in history, and went to work as a tutor for the probation service, encouraging ex-offenders to pursue education.

However, in 2002 he approached Goldsmiths with the idea of starting a project aimed at get-

ting ex-offenders, addicts and those with mental health issues into education.

From this, Open Book, was born. Now in its 15th year, he admits he was "chuffed" to receive the OBE and likens it to the day he donned his

cap and gown at his university graduation.

Open Book has helped over 300 people access education at all levels, and numbers are anything but dwindling.

"It's kind of like the mafia," Mr Baden laughs.

"Once you join, you never leave. It's not a dependency thing though, it's more like a religion. People start coming to sessions and then they never want to stop, it becomes a big part of their

**Continued on page 16**



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Mr Baden affirms that Open Book can't guarantee jobs, but that it does give its student more of a chance.

He said: "There's a lot of stigma around ex-offenders or addicts, and it's not getting any better, but we try to turn their experience from a negative into a positive.

"The problem with the current education systems inside prisons is that everyone has to start a level two NVQ [National Vocational Qualification] course, when some of these people have already got that and more, and so it's frustrating for them.

"We start people at the level they're meant to be at. The government are all about figures. If they can say 'we have this many people doing this many courses' then they're happy.

"I've seen people get their student card with Open Book and start crying. It's such an emotional thing for them because it takes away the stigma they've always faced, and gives them a new identity. They're not a 'convict' or an 'addict' anymore, they're a 'student'.

"While I was studying I had this kind of epiphany. I was revising in the library, reading a history book about witch hunts, and I suddenly thought 'what the f\*\*\* am I doing here?' - a few years ago I was sitting in a cell, and now I'm surrounded by educated people in a university. And that's the thing with addiction and crime, your whole identity is about that, but when you become a student you have something else, something better, that you are. And that's why most of the people who have come from that background are the best students, because it means so much to them."

He speaks with enthusiasm and awe of some of the people he's met through Open Book.

"One of our guys in prison was offered a shorter sentence," says Mr Baden. "But he rejected it so that he could stay and finish his education and help mentor other prisoners. He said he'd rather do that than leave early.

"But every single person who walks through



**DEDICATED:**  
Joe Baden says  
he is seeking  
redemption

our doors is inspirational. There's so many staff and students who are inspirational. The amount of people who come to us and say they're stupid when they're not, they just have a different culture. We've given them poems in cockney rhyming slang and then in the Queen's English and asked them to explain to us why they think they're stupid for being able to understand the cockney version but not the other. They're not stupid, they're just a product of their environment, as we all are.

"An important thing to note is that none of the people who have come through Open Book have reoffended, and that is something that we are really proud of."

In the near future Mr Baden is hoping to set up a homeless college in Chatham, which he

hopes will lend a hand to those who are struggling to get off the streets.

"There will be a college and student halls all on the one campus, and we're hoping to raise the funds so that they don't have to pay anything to live there, and they won't have to stay in hostels anymore.

"There is that symbolic thing again; people will be able to progress through education without having to worry about paying rent. It's really difficult for people who are trying to live independently - young people with limited methods - to study and pay for everything they need. It's ludicrous. There's young people who are trying to turn their lives around and do positive things and they're penalised constantly because they have to pay for all these different

things.

"Though we're raising the money so they won't have to pay for anything, they will have to go through Ucas just like everyone else. But we're hoping that through not paying to study or live that in five years time when they're finished they'll come back and give back their services in some way - teaching a class or sharing their experience. Most of the people who work for Open Book have come through the project themselves, and so they can really relate to the people they're helping."

**■ Open Book is open to anyone who would like to take part, applicants do not have to come from a criminal or addiction background. For more information visit [gold.ac.uk/open-book](http://gold.ac.uk/open-book).**



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# Is power turning its back on benefit of wind farms?

**Adele Couchman** on the benefits, or otherwise, of Kent's ever increasing wind farm productivity

**W**IND farms in Kent are about to take an even bigger role in supplying the electricity needs of the country, a leading energy expert has said.

Kent currently has seven wind farms and energy developments, whose combined electricity output could effectively generate enough power to supply more than 800,000 households per year - more than the 748,000 homes in Kent and Medway. They include the 175 turbine London Array - the world's largest offshore wind farm 12 miles north of the Kent coastline in the Greater Thames estuary.

And with major extensions proposed to the 100 turbine Thanet Offshore Wind Farm by Swedish energy company Vattenfall, a further 34 turbines could be added to its existing fleet some 12km from the shore in Margate. If approved, the site could generate enough electricity to supply an additional 229,000 homes.

According to the director of Canterbury Christ Church's energy and governance group Dr Amelia Hatfield, it's only likely Kent will become even more significant in harnessing much needed wind energy for the entire country.

"Kent is a frontline state, pioneering in wind farm energy enterprises. Looking forward in five or ten years time, the energy

generation from Kent is set to expand the range of offshore wind farms we have.

"It has a great ability, and not always a recognised ability, to support national climate change targets and promote British leadership in energy change post-Brexit.

"We have a county-based expertise that needs to be recognised and funded nationally. It is a pioneer in the electricity it produces nationally, not just for Kent."

In a report co-authored by Dr Hatfield, it is estimated that 19,600 people in Kent are employed in renewables and low carbon related industries - although she says the industries are aiming to double that number in future.

Wind power provided 11.5 per cent of the UK's total power output in 2016 - slightly down from the 12 per cent the year before. There are also concerns that the amount of power actually generated from the turbines may be a fraction of the maximum output due to the vagaries of the weather.

Other major offshore wind farms in Kent include Vattenfall's Kentish Flats - a 30 turbine wind farm some eight to 13km north of Herne Bay,

which supplies the needs of 60,000 homes annually. The site was extended by 15 turbines two years ago, with the site now capable of providing electricity for a further 35,000 homes per year.

Vattenfall's head of offshore UK wind development, Andy Paine, says the company has been encouraged to extend its developments thanks to continued support from the government, which says it will back a doubling of the offshore wind industry by 2030 if the cost of generation continues to fall.

But a number of energy companies across Kent have either withdrawn or had their applications rejected for wind farms in recent years, blaming government cuts to subsidies for onshore wind farms and tougher planning rules.

Green MEP for the south east, Keith Taylor, is critical of the government's policy towards renewables, warning green investors are being discouraged because of a wave of "political opposition" against the sector.

He told KoS: "The government say they do not want to pay any tax payers' money to subsidise energy, but they are underlining nuclear projects by millions.

"When I asked Amber Rudd [former energy secretary, now home secretary] the question of why they are cutting renewable energy in

spite of all the positives, she didn't have an answer.

"The government completely needs a new energy strategy for the next 100 years. At the moment, people are shrinking away from investment, which is such a shame."

Despite welcoming the news for the possible extension of the Thanet Offshore wind farm, Mr Taylor said more needed to be done to support green energy and protect the county.

"Unless we do something now there will be serious repercussions in Kent with rising sea levels," he added. "People have to engage and think of 50 or 100 years time - I know I want my kids to live in a land that doesn't flood.

"But as long as political parties like Ukip and the Conservatives continue to say we don't like them, setting up wind farms is just going to become more and more difficult."

Kent is currently home to three onshore wind energy developments, including the 26 turbine Little Cheyne Court wind farm on the Romney Marsh, which generates enough electricity

per year to supply over 32,000 homes. The other two onshore turbine sites sit in the Port of Sheerness and by HMP Standford, also on Sheppey.

But a number of planned wind energy developments have been scrapped following the end to subsidies for new onshore wind farms last year.

The funding for the subsidies came from the "renewable obligation", which is funded by levies added to household fuel bills.

In addition to the Conservative's policy on renewables, onshore investors have also cited a change to planning policy as a difficulty to move ahead with new wind farms - with more precedence given to local communities who oppose planning applications for wind energy development.

Among those who have struggled under the new rules in Kent include developers Airvolution Energy, who proposed two onshore wind farms on Sheppey and the Romney Marsh.

A spokesperson for the company said the four turbine project in Old Romney did not go ahead because of the government's cut to subsidies, adding that "many companies are stopping investing because of government changes".

In addition, Airvolution's application to build four turbines at New Rides

FARM on Sheppey was rejected by Swale Borough Council because of concern from locals over the impact on the landscape - a recurring issue energy companies must try and overcome. The company is appealing against the council, and a decision could be reached by the secretary of state as early as this summer.

Two further six turbine on-shore wind projects have also struggled to gain momentum in recent years.

Energy company Ecotricity said it made an application to Shepway District Council in 2012 regarding a scheme in Sellindge, near Folkestone, which would be capable of powering 11,800 homes a year - but is yet to hear a decision.

A proposed wind farm on the Romney Marsh capable of powering nearly 10,000 homes a year was also dropped in 2015 because of the government's policy on renewables.

But Green county councillor Martin Whybrow said Shepway residents had legitimate concerns about the impact further onshore windfarms could have on the landscape.

"We need to be able to make away from fossil fuels, and wind is an important part of that mix.

"But in regards to wind turbines, we need to look at them on a case by case basis, and sometimes it is perfectly valid

to reject applications.

"There were numerous objections to the sites on the Romney Marsh from organisations like Natural England and the RSPB. It has to be in the right place and there needs to be a rigorous planning process that takes into consideration of the relevant issues.

"The two sites were not the best in terms of the environmental impact on the marsh - with wildlife being an important attractor for the area."

He added: "I remain optimistic about offshore, but in terms of onshore, Kent is already a heavily populated part of the country. We already have a lot of infrastructure, and with lorry parks planned in the future it would be a struggle to find appropriate sites."

Conservative Swale borough councillor Mike Dendor also questioned the economic viability and effectiveness of some wind energy developments.

"My personal view on wind farms is that we should support what is economically viable," he said.

"I'm not a great believer in massive subsidy, and to have wind renewables they must stand on their own feet.

"If they are onshore and the economy stacks up, I do not have an objection.

"For the offshore wind farms, the maintenance is so

much higher and I know there has been all sorts of issues with the Whitstable offshore.

"Half of them are turned off when the winds are too high, which in my opinion defeats the object."

Speaking of the government's investment in onshore and offshore wind farms, a spokesperson for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said:

"The government subsidises lots of different investments, including renewable technologies.

"The idea is to bring down costs of new technologies over time, to the point where they don't need new subsidies so they are commercially viable on their own.

"We have made cuts to some of the cheapest ways to deliver renewable electricity, including solar and onshore.

"Offshore wind is less mature, and that's why are currently investing more in this sector.

"There was a 2015 manifesto commitment to end subsidies for onshore windfarms, as these are paid for by money levied on energy bills and it's important to keep the cost of these bills down.

"We will shortly be announcing a £730 million funding package for renewable technology, which offshore wind will benefit from."



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# Naked DIY-er gets all clear from court

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

**A**N ex-soldier who carried out DIY and gardening while naked at his Kent home says he is "fighting a cause for tolerance and respect" after being acquitted of public order charges.

Robert Jenner, 42, was initially charged with 13 counts of acting disorderly in the garden of his terraced home in Stevens Road, Eccles, near Maidstone, before appearing at Maidstone Magistrates' Court this week.

However, magistrates cleared him of the alleged offences after deliberating for over an hour on Tuesday.

Mr Jenner, who served as an infantryman in Iraq before becoming a self-employed carpenter, left neighbours "disgusted" when he was spotted working in the nude on a number of occasions last summer, the court was told.

Various witnesses said they felt "embarrassed" by Mr Jenner's actions, admitting they "did not want to see that", which caused him to be arrested four times last year.

Paul Edwards, prosecuting, told the court: "We all agree that being

naked is not, per se, a criminal offence but the norms are that people wear clothes.

"The prosecution says he did have the necessary intention to cause harassment, alarm or distress, under the [Public Order] Act."

Mr Edwards cited earlier comments made by neighbour, Lisa Jarrett, saying she was affected by Mr Jenner's actions so much so that she phoned the police more than once and made additional statements.

Alex Davey, defending, said: "Naturism is perfectly lawful and considered a freedom of expression.

"But it's not that common so people feel surprised, uncomfortable and embarrassed when they see it.

"A public order offence is when there is disorderly behaviour and that is carried out with the intention to cause harassment alarm or distress.

"This is not a case of that behaviour at all, the behaviour is gardening or DIY, the only issue is that he does it in a state of undress.

"If a man plays tennis he does so well or badly, with clothes or not, but the behaviour is still tennis."

Mr Jenner said he first became interested in naturism on a trip to Cyprus in 1999 when he discovered a nudist beach.

He told the court he took part in naked bike rides and other organised nudist events and that wearing no clothes gave him "a sense of freedom".

Rejecting accusations of exhibitionism, he added: "There no constraints, everyone is the same - I do it whenever I can, weather-permitting.

"If I'm within the boundaries of my own property, to me, that's perfectly fine.

"If I can't see a need for clothes I won't put them on."

The defendant said he would not go nude in the high street because he was "not strong enough" and told the court there were "too many police and too many bad people" for him to do so outside the boundaries of his home.

He added: "People get away with covering themselves head to toe - I don't go naked to contradict that. I go naked to feel free.

"People should tolerate that as they tolerate everyone else wearing whatever clothes they want.

"I feel like I am fighting a cause for tolerance and respect."

After a lengthy deliberation, chairman of the bench, Andrew Backway, told the court it rejected counts on the dates of August 29 as evidence wasn't conclusive as to whether Mr Jenner



**CLEARED:** Ex-soldier Robert Jenner was acquitted of acting disorderly after neighbours spotted him naked in his garden. Photo: SWNS

was inside or outdoors, on September 1 because it judged Mrs Jarrett had gone out of her way, down the road, to see him naked, and on September 7 when none of the witnesses had seen Mr Jenner inside or outside, dressed or undressed.

Article 10 of the Human Rights Act - which covers freedom of expression - was engaged for another eight counts, as magistrates told the court they felt being naked was a suitable such expression, and did not amount

to disorderly behaviour as he was in his own garden, with restricted views.

A further two counts were dismissed earlier in the case.

Speaking outside court, Mr Jenner told KoS he would continue to practise naturism in the summer.

"I've won a battle but it's a tiny one, we've got a long way to go to get tolerance and acceptance," he said.

"At the end of the day, it's just a human body."

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# Remembering the 'forgotten' disaster of the HMS Ghurka

We take a look back at one of the First World War's Naval casualties which lies off the coast of Kent and is still the watery tomb of those who perished 100 years ago

By Adele Couchman  
Adele.Couchman@archant.co.uk

**A** CAMPAIGNER is calling for a memorial for a wrecked ship that sunk off the Kent coast 100 years ago.

It was on the evening of February 8 1917 that HMS Ghurka (the spelling of the ship's name is different to the conventional use of the word Gurkha) hit a German mine off Dungeness, bringing down 75 crewmen and leaving only five survivors.

What's left of the wartime wreck remains on the Dungeness seabed, with the ship officially given status as a war grave and a designated protected place by the Ministry of Defence in 2008. Today, the majority of the drowned men still remain trapped onboard the ship - with only one man's body ever found.

But 100 years on, coastal heritage researcher Christopher Conn fears no-one will remember the lives of those who went down with their ship due to a lack of a memorial marking

**“No-one will visit the unmarked war grave, lay a wreath or sound the last post. No divers will go down to tie the white ensign flag on the ship's stern”**

**Christopher Conn,**  
Campaigner for a memorial

their final resting place here in Kent.

He said: “Wednesday, February 8 marked 100 years since the loss of HMS Ghurka and almost all of her crew. We should be remembering their sacrifice and honour their memory, but I cannot see that this Shep- way war grave will be remembered.

“No-one will visit the unmarked maritime war grave, lay a wreath or sound the last post. No divers will go down to tie the white ensign flag on the ship's stern.

“There will be no commemoration church service, flowers laid on any plaque or tablet to remember this First World War protected wreck.”

HMS Ghurka was an 880-ton, Tribal class destroyer built in 1907 for the Royal Navy. She was one of five destroyers ordered as part of a shipbuilding programme in 1905-06, who were all named after foreign nations and soldiers and saw service in the First World War. They were HMS Tartar, HMS Mohawk, HMS Cossack and HMS Afridi - all of whom were sold for scrap after their part in the war effort was complete.

As Commonwealth War Graves Commission historian Max Dutton explains, HMS Ghurka played a key part in the Dover Patrol - a discrete unit of the Royal Navy based at Dover and Dunkirk during the duration of the Great War.

“HMS Ghurka was part of the Dover patrol, which was a very significant naval group during the war who protected our shores and hunted down enemy fleet,” he said.

“The Dover Patrol's main role was to cover the English Channel to pre-

vent German shipping from being able to go through the Channel en route to the Atlantic Ocean.”

Blocking the German ships would then oblige the German Navy to travel via a much longer route around Scotland.

As well as playing a part in the Dover Patrol - whose memorial has stood at Leathercote Point near St Margaret's Bay since 1921 - HMS Ghurka played a part in the sinking of the German submarine U-8 in 1915 before she eventually sunk two years later herself.

Recalling that fateful night which took the lives of 75 men, Mr Conn added: “Many of the crew died in the explosion. Others drowned before the nearest ship - the armed trawler Highlander - reached the scene after hearing the explosion.

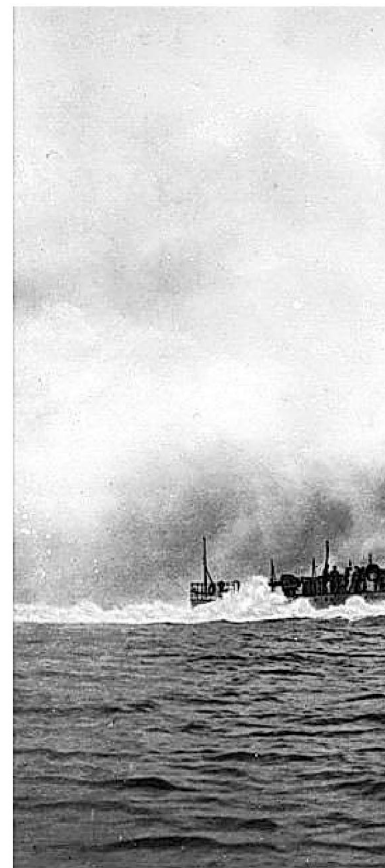
“When the trawler arrived only the tip of the destroyer's bow was above the water, her stern having touched the seabed.

“The Highlander tried to launch her boat but it was swept away by huge swells. However, the trawler managed to drag five men covered in

**BEFORE:** Starboard side view of

oil from the icy sea.”

Among those found alive was the destroyer flotilla gunnery officer



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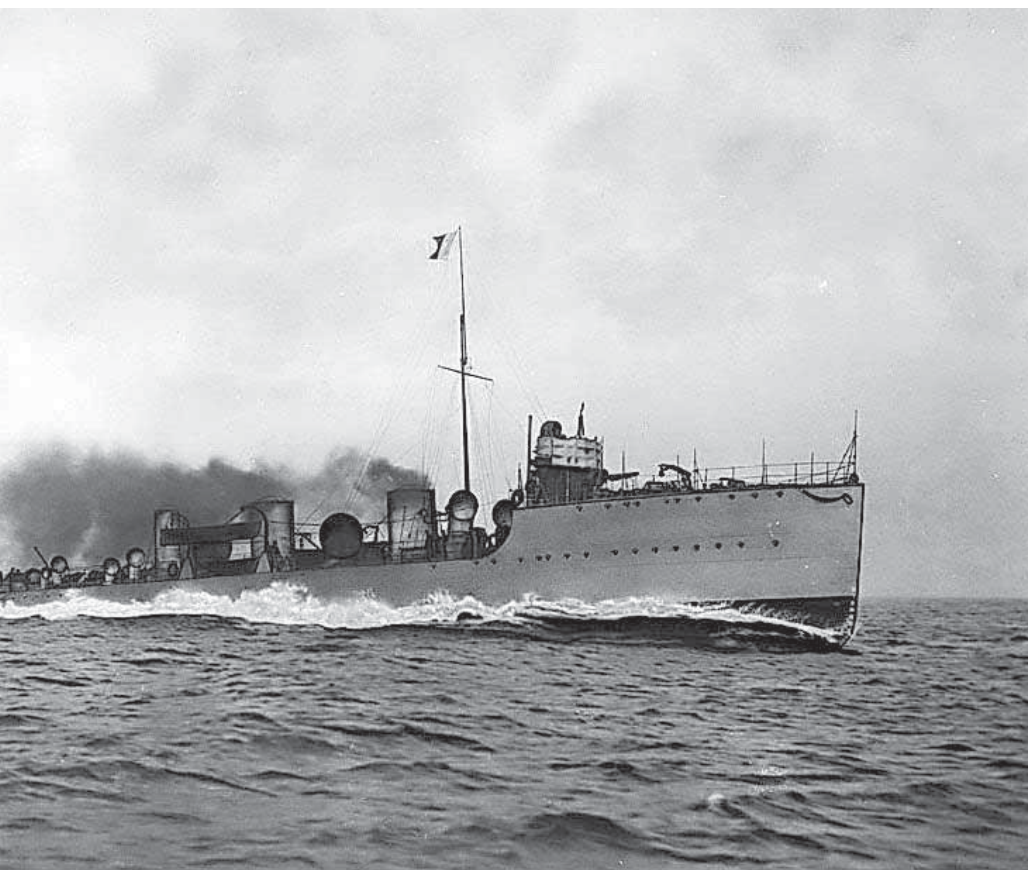
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HMS Gurka at sea in 1908, nine years before she was sunk. Picture: Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Commander FHL Lewin, who was a passenger onboard HMS Gurkha. He refused to be rescued until he

released one man from the tangled debris of the sinking destroyer's bow and had helped in the rescue of four of

the destroyer ratings. For his actions, he was awarded the Stanhope Gold Medal for bravery.

Mr Dutton adds: "Ships being sunk in this way was very common during this period.

"Instead of attacking head on, both sides would use mines - a very cheap way of destroying a battle ship. It was a constant battle seeking out mines and destroying them.

"It was when HMS Gurka was conducting its standard patrol route through the English Channel keeping home coastal waters safe when it was unfortunate enough to strike one of those sea mines.

"It would have gone down quickly, seeing as the mines were packed with explosives and could strike in a half a battleship, and HMS Gurka was only a little boat. The five men who survived would have almost certainly been on the top deck."

For the majority of the 75 men who died in the explosion, their memory is preserved by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The commission has a record of all the names of the casualties who died onboard HMS Gurka.

According to historian Max Dutton of the commission, their memories are not forgotten.

"All the men who lost their lives on the ship have been commemorated by us, and are named on three of our naval war memorials in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.

"The only man that was ever found was chief artificer engineer John Corner, who is buried in a marked grave in Gillingham Woodland Cemetery after he was picked up off the shore by military authorities.

"The rest of the men were never found, and it's very likely that they are still trapped onboard the ship."

Some 67 of the men are named at

the Portsmouth naval memorial, four of them in Plymouth and two in Chatham. Their place of memorial reflects where they were registered in the Royal Navy.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission set up the memorials after the First World War as a way to commemorate members of the Royal Navy with no known grave.



**REST:** Ship lies off the coast of Dungeness



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# How storm killed thousands as 140mph winds hit Channel

As Kent braces itself for another chilly spell and the threat of snow, we speak to an author who has examined some of the more extreme weather to hit the county

By Chris Murphy  
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

**I**N 1703 a great storm struck southern and central England - so ferocious it blew ships hundreds of miles off-course and thousands of seamen die as their vessels were blown on to the Goodwin Sands.

In London, 2,000 chimney stacks were blown down, and the New Forest saw 4,000 oak trees uprooted.

Author Daniel Defoe, writer of such classics as Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders even started a jaunt through Kent in a bid to record the colossal number of trees blown down. But the numbers were so extraordinary he had to give up. He blamed the cyclone on divine punishment for poor performance against Catholic armies in the War of the Spanish Succession.

Now author John Withington has taken a look at that and a host of other meteorological phenomena which have hit the county, which may make us all feel a little more grateful for the rather more mundane conditions

we've experienced recently.

He explained to KoS: "Daniel Defoe was narrowly missed by a house that collapsed into the street as he fought his way through the howling winds.

"He spoke of seeing tiles being blown 40 yards then embedded eight inches into the ground.

"After the event, he advertised in the London Gazette for witnesses to send in their accounts and used the material to compile a classic account, The Storm, published the following year. His overall verdict was: 'No pen could describe it, nor tongue express it, nor thought conceive it unless by one in the extremity of it.'"

That storm and others around the world are contained in the book Storm: Nature and Culture.

He said: "Defoe set out to count how many trees had been felled in Kent, but gave up when he got to 17,000.

"Churches were also badly hit with the spire at Brencley, said to be the highest in the county at the time, brought down, while a dozen ships were grounded on the Goodwins and other sandbanks, and the biggest ship

lost in the storm sank in the Medway.

"It was by far the deadliest tempest Britain has ever suffered, with about 8,000 lives lost, but some scientists now argue that storms are getting even fiercer."

Mr Withington added: "Defoe calculated 25 parks had lost more than 1,000 trees each, and the number lost across the country almost certainly ran into millions.

Gusts on land hit 75mph and 140mph at sea, causing carnage.

"The biggest ship lost in the storm was the 90-gun Vanguard, which went down in the Medway, but fortunately there was no one on board.

"By dawn, a dozen ships had been driven ashore on the Goodwins and other sandbanks. A few hours later, they had all been dashed to pieces and most of their crews drowned - a loss of up to 3,000 lives. The only survivor from the 272 aboard the Mary was a seaman named Thomas Atkins, who was washed off her as she broke up and thrown onto the quarter deck of the Stirling Castle.

"When she ran aground, he was flung overboard into a boat which

had broken adrift. He reached shore nearly unconscious and suffering from exposure, but alive, along with just 70 others from the crew of 349.

"The Royal Navy lost 14 ships, and overall, the death toll at sea was put at 8,000. No wonder the Observer newspaper declared 'never was such a storm of wind, such a hurricane and tempest known in the memory of man'."

After the Great Storm of 1987 in England, which felled perhaps 15 million trees, the eminent nature writer, Richard Mabey, said it should be seen 'as an integral part of the workings of the environment, not some alien force'.

And 20 years on, the National Trust's head of forestry, Ray Hawes, pointed to what had happened at Toys Hill in Kent. One area of woodland was cleared and replanted after the storm, while another was left as an experimental 'non-intervention' area. The part where nature was allowed to take its course had been more successful, with a far wider variety of trees and flowers. "At the time," Hawes noted, "we would have

said the wood was destroyed. But we now know that woods are not destroyed, they just change."

For Mr Withington, it was the start of a career that has seen him chronicle some major disasters.

He told us: "When I first realised how stormy Kent was, I was pretty surprised. I was raised in the north of



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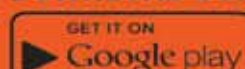
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**CHAOS:** An engraving capturing the scene on and around the Goodwin Sands as the storm struck, pulling boats away from safety and to peril on the Goodwin Sands off the Deal coast. Author John Withington, top right

England, and we used to come down south for our holidays because it was supposed to be sunnier and warmer.

"Kent also suffered badly in the Great Storm of October 16, 1987. Again many trees were felled, partly

because their roots were loosened after the wettest start to an October on record. Sevenoaks was famously reduced to one oak.

"At 500 year old Knole Park, two thirds of the trees were brought

down, while at Churchill's home at Chartwell, a spectacular horseshoe of beeches, much loved by Sir Winston, was demolished. Kent County Council contractors had to remove an estimated 400,000 tonnes of fallen tim-



ber from the A25 alone. In the words of Sevenoaks District Council chief executive Bruce Cova: 'A hundred years of our heritage disappeared in a few minutes and our countryside will never be the same again in our life time'.

"When the district council's emergency team assembled, Cova told them these were the nearest conditions they might ever see to a nuclear attack."

He went on: "Environmentalists nowadays stress the beneficial effects of storms.

"Snow can shield seeds and plants against the cold. The difference in temperature between the top and bottom of a snow blanket can be as much as 50°F.

"Lightning carries so much energy it can liberate nitrogen atoms in the air. They then fall to earth with rain, and combine with minerals in the soil to create nitrates, which act as natural fertilisers.

"Fires started by lightning can also be beneficial.

"They clear undergrowth and debris from woods, turning it into nutri-

ents, and allow sunlight and water to penetrate through to the forest floor, all of which helps seeds to germinate."

Mr Withington added: "More recently, Kent suffered in the very stormy winter of 2013-4, with Yalding flooded on Christmas Day, with dirty brown water washing along the High Street and invading people's homes, submerging them waist-deep.

"Perhaps a sign of how much more volatile the climate is becoming was the fact that when the village experienced a flood in 2000 that caused £6 million of damage, they were told it was a once-in-a-century event. Just 13 years later came a flood that was twice as damaging."

But Kent's weather isn't just a story of storms.

On 10 August 2003, Faversham recorded the heaviest temperature ever seen in the UK at 38.5C.

■ **John Withington is an award-winning television, radio and newspaper journalist. His book Storm: Nature and Culture is available now and published by Reaktion Books. Price £14.95.**

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## Top tips: Saving for your wedding



MANY of us will attend a wedding this summer - but you could find yourself saying, "I do" to a big bill

The cost of the big day can soon add up. Guests can expect to pay nearly £500, while bridesmaids and ushers can find themselves spending more than £1,000, according to research amongst 2,000 people.

For many guests, the outgoings can start way before the big day itself, with the typical cost of attending a stag or a hen do coming to £58, according to a survey from American Express.

Choosing the perfect gift for the happy couple costs £102 on average.

A new outfit will come to £75, while topping it off with hair and beauty treatments costs another £28.

Guests typically spend £94 travelling to a wedding and £74 on a hotel,

while a further £48 is spent on average toasting the bride and groom.

This brings the total cost for a wedding guest to £479 on average, according to the findings.

If you're lucky enough to be asked to be a bridesmaid, you can expect to spend £1,267, while an usher can expect to pay £1,127.

To fund the cost, 44 per cent plan to dip into their monthly salary, 26 per cent will use their savings, while a further 22 per cent expect to put their wedding costs on a credit card.

So if you're planning to attend a wedding this summer, how can you keep the costs down and enjoy the big day without worrying about how it will affect your bank balance?

For some tips from American Express turn the page...



**CELEBRATE:** It's a great day out - but the costs can all add up so follow our tips to make it a little easier.

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## Here are some tips for saving for that all-important big day:

■ **Personal touch.** If your gift budget is limited, consider giving a present that has a personal touch. Video compilations or framed photo montages can be very meaningful. If you're creative, offer to make or design the wedding stationery for the happy couple as your gift to them.

■ **Plan ahead.** When gift lists are sent to guests, ensure you're one of the earlier purchasers. For those using registers, getting in early can mean picking and choosing reasonable gifts that suit your budget, as opposed to being left at the end of the queue with only the higher budget items to choose from.

■ **Don't forget points make presents** - check how many rewards points you have on your credit, charge or store card. You may have enough to get a wedding gift with your points, which means you can give a gift without spending a penny.

■ **Get renting.** It's always fun to have something new to wear for a wedding, but this can get expensive. Consider hiring a dress or suit for the weekend. Plenty of companies now offer designer dresses and suits that can be rented at a fraction of the price.

■ **Use your tech.** If you only need a ride from the station to the reception, consider using taxi apps instead of hiring a car. Don't forget to cut costs by car sharing with other wedding guests.

■ **If you do spend, do it wisely.** Take advantage of vouchers and discounts.



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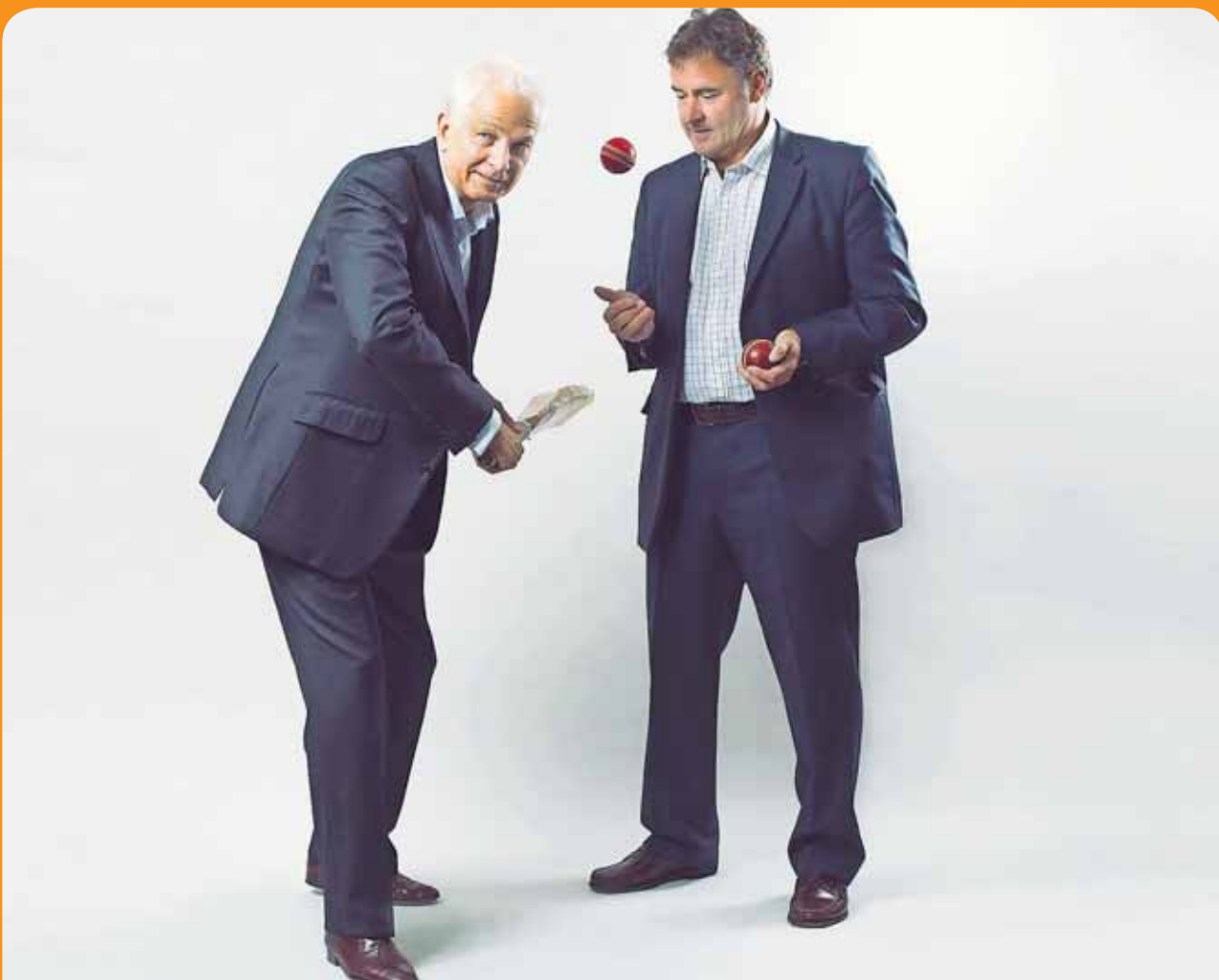
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## Captain Fantastics team up for night of cricketing fun

Having met on a Kent sports field, David Gower and Chris Cowdrey are on tour

**I**F you happened to be stood on the side of a muddy field in Canterbury at some point in the early 1970s, then there's a chance you may have seen two future England cricket captains rolling around in the mud.

The duo in question, David Gower and Chris Cowdrey, were battling it out on opposing sides of the rugby pitch, representing their schools - King's for Gower, Tonbridge School for Cowdrey. More significantly, however, it sparked a friendship - over a disputed try - which saw them rise up cricket's youth ranks, into the county arena, captaining their respective sides - Leicestershire and Kent - and then both into the England Test side where, again, they would both have the honour of being named captain.

Both now long since retired from the professional game, they contin-

ue to make a decent living from their past heroics and, for the first time, the life-long pals are teaming up for a UK tour where they will share anecdotes of their careers.

"I think, like a good marriage, the secret of our friendship is not seeing too much of one another," admits Cowdrey, 59, ahead of the tour's start next month which will include a night in Tunbridge Wells.

"The problem when we played was that cricket's a busy game. He'd come off a tour with England then straight into the county season. But when Kent played Leicestershire we'd see each other most evenings and keep in touch.

"We enjoy taking the mickey out of each other we often send each other 'challenging' texts as we travel the country. We have lots planned, but I suspect the funniest moments will be the off-the-cuff quips at each other's expense."

Chris Cowdrey may not have enjoyed the longevity of an international career as Gower did, but in Kent he is part of the Cowdrey dynasty which has stretched across the generations. His father, Colin, was one of the greatest England players of all time and his sons Chris and Graham would both go on to play for Kent during the 1980s - Chris becoming captain and enjoying his England call-up.

Now, all these years later, Fabian Cowdrey, son of Chris, is a first team regular for the county side.

For now, though, the glory days of the 1980s will be the main topic at David Gower, Chris Cowdrey and the Holy Bail as the duo put the finishing touches to a tour which starts in Birmingham on March 2 and takes in the Assembly Hall Theatre the following day before ending up in London's Lyric Theatre at

the end of the month.

The two-hour show will see the audience able to put questions in a cricket helmet during the interval and the duo tackle them in the second half of the show.

Rehearsals, however, are perhaps fitting of the duo. Explains Cowdrey: "Gower came over and stayed with me and rehearsals were due to start at 10.30am. However, by the time we decided it would be better to have a bite to eat and a little something to drink, it was after lunch it actually got going."

Expect a fun and entertaining night out.

Tickets for David Gower, Chris Cowdrey and the Holy Bail at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, are on sale now. The show takes place on March 3.

**See sport for Cowdrey's view on England's new captain.**

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**LINDA**, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, winning dining. Age unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337

**LOVING** lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325

**ATTRACTIVE** Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323

**SANDRA**, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671

**HELEN**, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493

**CAROL**, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told). Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783

**MARY**, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775

**SARAH**, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777

**SUE**, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLMT mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669

**ANGELA**, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495

**PRESENTABLE** divorced lady, young 60, many interests, animal lover, seeks outgoing, cheerful, honest, smart looking man, for cultural times. Text only Mailbox: 557626

**LESLEY**, 66, retired beauty therapist, blonde hair, blue eyes, size 14, likes going out, travelling, holidays, arts, looking for a nice guy, 57-67, would be great to get a reply. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424147

**GARETH** handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

**NICK**, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no strings in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787

**RETIRED**, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697

**59YR** old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685

**MALE** 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683

**MARTIN** trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681

**MARK** 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679

**CARING** 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLMT lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677

**COLIN**, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359

**ANDY**, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, fun with no strings attached. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295

**NAUGHTY** curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLMT chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424543

**JULIE**, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLMT men friends for fun, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497

**ANGELA**, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495

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**DENTAL** practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087

**EDWARD**, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039

**TALL**, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021

**MALE**, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979

**HI** I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951

**JOHN**, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, sailing out, music, animals, WLMT slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043

**LIVELY** old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621

**59YR** old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685

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**ANDY**, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, fun with no strings attached. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295

**GARY**, 53, caring, likes snooker, bowls, looking for a nice woman to meet and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423145



**MALE**, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLMT lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211

**RICHARD**, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fairs, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207

**BRIAN**, 61, fit, bit grey but genuine and kind, looking for a naughty female, for no strings adult fun, if you're interested please get back to me. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423483

**JOHN**, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, sailing out, music, animals, WLMT slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043

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**GAY** guy, friendly with a GSOH, likes sport and art, WLMT similar guy for a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425563

**SIMON**, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. Text Only. Mailbox: 4196422

**ALAN**, 68, gay man seeking a man, 65-75, for fun and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424885

**FEMALE** seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. Text only to Mailbox No: 4748240

**SEEKING** ladies for good company, socialising and a bit of fun, BBW local to Kent, get in touch and lets start having fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413623

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# Musical makes a song and dance of menopausal women

By Emily King  
emily.king@archant.co.uk

**K**KNOWN for playing Heather Trott in East-Enders before her departure from the soap, Cheryl Fergison is now about to embark on her second tour of Menopause the Musical, which will be making its way to the actress' home county of Kent.

Arriving in Gravesend in February, the musical is about embracing the fears and embarrassment of the dreaded menopause. Four women meet in a shopping centre, all from different backgrounds but with one thing in common - the menopause. They bond over hot flushes, night sweats, irritability and red faces.

Alongside Ms Fergison in this hilarious comedy is Maureen Nolan (The Nolans), Rebecca Wheatley (Casualty) and Ruth Berkeley (Penny Dreadful).

Speaking of the musical, Ms Fergison, who is from Sidcup, says: "It's a musical for everyone. Women who are currently going through menopause will be there like 'yes I understand this! That's me', women who have that to



**HIPPIE:** Ms Fergison's character meets other women going through menopause in the knicker aisle of shop

come will be saying 'oh so that's why my mum's been like that'. Even partners or sons of women will be able to enjoy it and empathise with the ladies in their lives."

Though she also states the audience is usually made up of 90 per cent women and 10 per cent men, the actress claims that the songs make it enjoyable for everyone.

She comments: "It's a really fun tour. There's loads of great upbeat

songs. They're tunes that everyone will recognise but with the lyrics changed, which essentially makes it even funnier because they then reflect how the characters are feeling.

"The response we get from the audience is always great, and they always tell us it's really relateable. It's hilarious when the audience has had a few drinks as well 'cause then they're calling out and agree-

ing with parts of the musical."

Ms Fergison is also a patron for local hospice Ellenor, and will be doing a bucket collection to raise money for the hospice after the show.

The Musical is coming to Gravesend's Woodville Theatre on February 23.

For tickets visit [woodville.seatlive.com](http://woodville.seatlive.com) or call the box office on 08442 439 480.

## Creepy crawlies ascend

CHILDREN'S wildlife TV presenter Naomi Wilkinson is bringing her spring tour Wild and Scary to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 10. For tickets visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk)



## Russell Brand's Re:Birth

RUSSELL BRAND has announced his stand-up tour Re:Birth will be visiting Dartford's Orchard Theatre, Chatham's Central Theatre, Margate's Winter Gardens, Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall. For information on dates and tickets visit [ticketmaster.co.uk](http://ticketmaster.co.uk).

## Folk music's winning duo

BBC Radio Two Folk Award winners Phillip Henry and Hannah Martin, will visit St Edith Hall in Sevenoaks on March 3, and Hernhill Village Hall on March 4. Tickets available on the door.




## Shopaholic author's visit

BESTSELLING author of the Shopaholic series, Sophie Kinsella, will be signing copies and meeting fans at Waterstones Bluewater on February 18.

Ms Kinsella's latest book My Not So Perfect Life sees her challenge 'perfect instagram lives'. For more information visit [bluwater.co.uk](http://bluwater.co.uk)

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## Fifty years for O'Sullivan

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN is celebrating five decades of music with a new tour which is coming to Chatham's Brook Central Theatre on March 8. For tickets call 01634 338338 or visit [tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://tickets.medway.gov.uk)



## The rise of unlikely heroine

COMEDY play, Nell Gwynn, is making its way to Gravesend's Guild Theatre from February 23 to 25.

Nell Gwynn charts the rise of an unlikely heroine, from Coal Yard Alley to her hard-won place at the heart of King Charles II.

For tickets visit [gravesendtheatreguild.org](http://gravesendtheatreguild.org)

## Ghost hunt with a twist

FORT AMHERST is offering visitors the chance to experience the fright of their lives with its new ghost hunt opening on February 24.

For more information visit [ticketsource.co.uk](http://ticketsource.co.uk)



## Shakin' up Kent stages

SHAKIN' STEVENS is embarking on a tour to promote his 12th studio album *Echoes Of Our Time*. He will be playing gigs at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 19, Bromley's Churchill Theatre on April 27, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on April 30.

For tickets visit [ticketmaster.co.uk](http://ticketmaster.co.uk)

# X Factor's Louisa Johnson will support Olly Murs' county gig

By Emily King

[emily.king@archant.co.uk](mailto:emily.king@archant.co.uk)

**X**FACTOR winner Louisa Johnson has been announced as Olly Murs' support act when he plays in Canterbury this summer.

Following on from his spring arena tour, Olly Murs, one of British music's biggest stars, has announced his biggest headline shows yet: 20 outdoor dates across the UK, one of which will be in Canterbury's Spitfire Ground in July.

Mr Murs, who previously performed at Quex Park with Rizzle Kicks in 2012, said: "I am thrilled to play at The Spitfire Ground. Outdoor shows are so much fun and I am looking forward to performing my biggest songs on my biggest outdoor tour!"

2016 was a big year for Mr Murs and has seen him celebrate his fourth successive No.1 Album 24 HRS, becoming the most successful solo artist ever to come from the X Factor.

Before his huge summer tour, the spring of 2017 will see Mr Murs



**YOUNG:** Ms Johnson is the youngest person ever to win the singing competition

play 23 UK shows including three O2 Arenas and the opening night of the Teenage Cancer Trust show.

Since he shot to fame in 2009, he has recorded four multi-platinum albums, produced four number one singles with total record sales exceeding 10 million. 24 HRS is the follow up to the acclaimed million selling album *Never Been Better*.

Ms Johnson has been a familiar face since her triumph on the X Factor in 2015 as the youngest ever winner – followed by an impressive debut album and a hit collaboration with Clean Bandit – laying the foundations for what looks set to be an incredible 2017.

She said "I am so excited to be supporting Olly on his summer tour. He is an incredible artist; an

absolute inspiration, and we both cannot wait to see all the fans in Kent. It's going to be a brilliant night!"

Liz Doogan-Hobbs MBE, CEO of LHG Live, added: "We are thrilled, she is a superb new talent and commands a great following of fans."

The concert will take place on July 7. For information on tickets visit [www.ticketmaster.co.uk](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk)



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# More carrot, less steak for the 'flexitarian' diet

DIY SOS presenter Nick Knowles says we don't need to be vegan all the time, just during the week...

**N**ICK KNOWLES is aware he's not what many would picture when the word 'vegan' comes to mind.

"You tend to think that most vegans are petite, small, slim people, and I'm not," states the 54-year-old TV presenter, best known for his 18 years fronting BBC One home-improvement stalwart DIY SOS. "I'm a 46-inch chest, 6ft 2in, 17-stone rugby player!"

But if Mr Knowles doesn't look like a typical vegan - someone who doesn't consume any animal-product, including dairy, eggs and honey, as well as meat - some members of the vegan community who he terms "funda-lentilists" - are at pains to

point out he isn't really one anyway.

His lifestyle has been turned upside down since filming BBC Two's The Retreat last year, which saw him and a diverse group of participants head to a health centre in Thailand, ditching cigarettes, caffeine, alcohol and meat and replacing them with yoga, lots of vegetables and hikes through the mountains.

He lost nine kilos in three weeks, his cholesterol levels fell by a third, and his blood pressure dropped to a healthy level.

Since then, Mr Knowles has maintained a 'flexitarian' diet, meaning he largely eats vegetarian or vegan meals but will occasionally have meat or fish. It's a big change for a man who used to eat a sausage, ba-



**HEALTHY:** Nick Knowles

con and egg roll on his way to work, snack on scotch eggs, and regularly go out for steak lunches.

And while his first cookbook, Proper Healthy Food: Hearty Vegan And Vegetarian Recipes For Meat Lovers, focuses on this huge shift, he's still upset the apple cart.

"If you could do one day a week as being veggie, congratulations, you should get a pat on the back," he reasons. "You've reduced your meat intake, that's fantastic. If you can do it two or three days a week, even better."

"If you could get to a point where you're meat-free during the week and only treat yourself to meat during the weekends... when I say something like that, the Vegan Society goes, 'What? Treat yourself to dead animals?'

"You're never going to encourage people if every time they fail, you batter them over the head. I've been saying more carrot less stick. Or you could say, more carrot less steak!"

And the father-of-four feels the message is too important to be deterred.

"The vegan community is watching this book very carefully and I'm slightly worried about what I'm saying, which is that it's OK not to be fully vegan, but I don't really care," he says, between sips of peppermint tea. "I know the health benefits that come from eating a more plant-based diet are so important that we have to get past all of that rubbish, and encourage people to start eating meat-free once a week."

## Rotary charity night

THE ROTARY CLUB of Medway will present an evening of song and dance from the West End to Broadway and beyond at Chatham's Central Theatre on March 18.

Every ticket sold supports rotary charities and children's hospice family holidays - a wonderful Euro Disney holiday for children from Demelza and Ellenor Hospices to experience with their families.

For tickets visit [tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://tickets.medway.gov.uk)

## Little Red is opera star

A DOG from Dartford has been cast in the opera La Boheme, coming to the town's Orchard Theatre on February 19.

Little Red will be treading the boards as Musetta's dog in the cafe scene, with brass bands and lots of street children.

She has participated in competitive obedience and qualified for semi-finals of Scruffits at Crufts crossbreed of the year 2015.

For tickets visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk).

## Motown Magic returns

AFTER a sold out show in 2016, The Magic of Motown is returning to Margate's Winter Gardens on March 25.

Live on stage it is the music of the Temptations, Diana Ross and The Supremes, Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, Lionel Richie, Martha Reeves, and Isley Brothers.

For tickets visit [margatewintergardens.co.uk](http://margatewintergardens.co.uk).

## Youth dance auditions

ENGLISH YOUTH BALLET is auditioning for roles in for a Sleeping Beauty on February 21 at Cleeve Park School, Sidcup.

At the audition 100 male and female dancers (aged 8 - 18) from the county will be chosen to dance with professional dancers in the production at the Dartford's Orchard Theatre on August 25 and 26.

For more information visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk)

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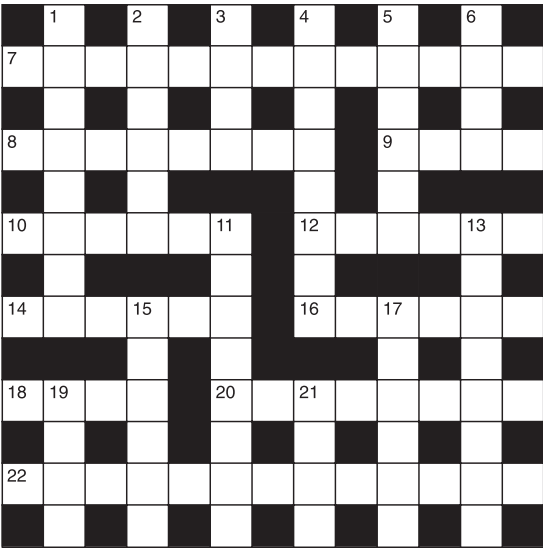
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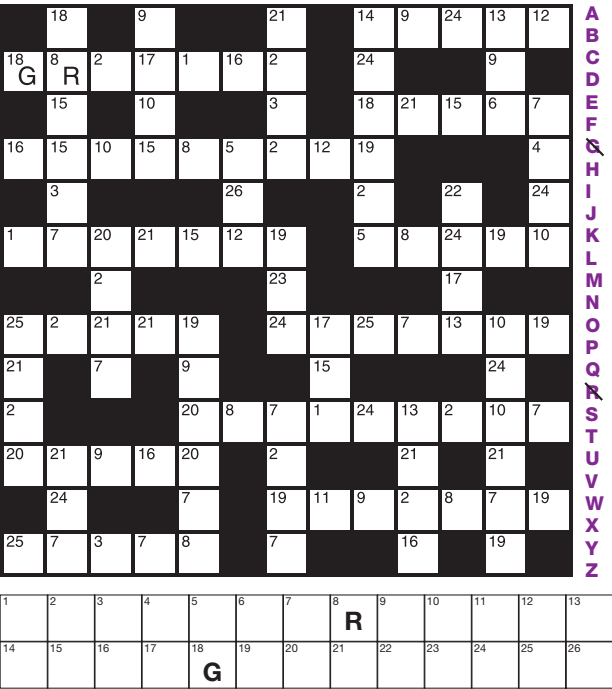
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  - 9. Thought (4)
  - 10. Splendid (6)
  - 12. Bury (6)
  - 14. Alcove (6)
  - 16. Property (6)
  - 18. Cease (4)
  - 20. Wickerwork (8)
  - 22. Categorical (13)
- Down**
- 1. Unsafe (8)
  - 2. Death (6)
  - 3. Forehead (4)
  - 4. Wrong (8)
  - 5. Severe (6)
  - 6. Centre (4)
  - 11. Meddler (8)
  - 13. Substance (8)
  - 15. Use (6)
  - 17. Vibration (6)
  - 19. Melody (4)
  - 21. Location (4)

Cryptic

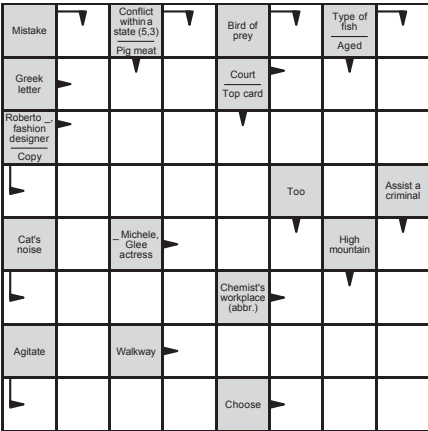
- Across**
- 7. Polite construction worker? (5,8)
  - 8. It could be simple curiosity (8)
  - 9. Raise 51 feet (4)
  - 10. He was a very fair man (6)
  - 12. Emphasise it's a cause of tension (6)
  - 14. Officer found on the staff? (6)
  - 16. He's in the corner for a short time (6)
  - 18. In the meantime he doesn't approve (4)
  - 20. Plan to arouse one's curiosity (8)
  - 22. Are they all model patients in it? (5,8)
- Down**
- 1. Nine dogs variously engaged (6,2)
  - 2. Glutton takes an age to finish a bird (6)
  - 3. Celebration when fate is pronounced (4)
  - 4. Self-expressive types (8)
  - 5. Head branch (6)
  - 6. Knotty marine hazard (4)
  - 11. Hustling around in the daytime (8)
  - 13. Odd number (8)
  - 15. One result of eavesdropping in winter (6)
  - 17. He must often work when others are playing (6)
  - 19. Refusal to start on time (4)
  - 21. Experiment with cricketers? (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

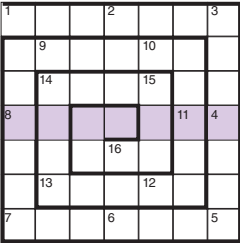
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET  
1 x Battleship  
2 x Cruiser  
3 x Destroyer  
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



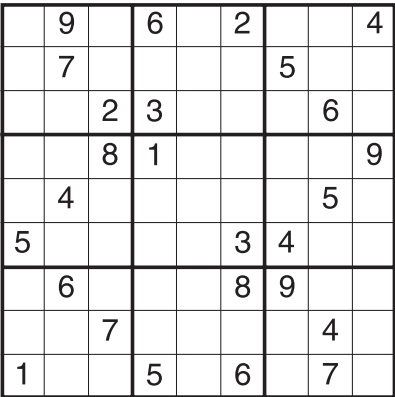
Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Hairless  
2. Dreary  
3. Inter  
4. Egg part  
5. Flying toy  
6. Egress  
7. Ballerina's skirt  
8. Unsightly  
9. Scream  
10. Turkish currency  
11. State or affirm  
12. Desire  
13. In this place  
14. Every  
15. Injured  
16. Ruffian

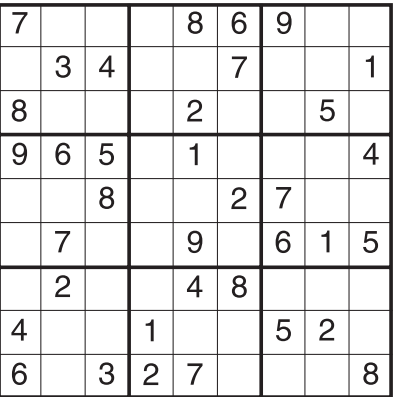
Keyword clue: A country

SUDOKU

Hard



Easy



Solutions

**Double Crossword**

Across: 7. Questioning (13): 18. Cease (4): 20. Wickerwork (8): 22. Categorical (13): 1. Unsafe (8): 2. Death (6): 3. Forehead (4): 4. Wrong (8): 5. Severe (6): 6. Centre (4): 11. Meddler (8): 13. Substance (8): 15. Use (6): 17. Vibration (6): 19. Melody (4): 21. Location (4): 7. Polite construction worker? (5,8): 8. It could be simple curiosity (8): 9. Raise 51 feet (4): 10. He was a very fair man (6): 12. Emphasise it's a cause of tension (6): 14. Officer found on the staff? (6): 16. He's in the corner for a short time (6): 18. In the meantime he doesn't approve (4): 20. Plan to arouse one's curiosity (8): 22. Are they all model patients in it? (5,8): 1. Nine dogs variously engaged (6,2): 2. Glutton takes an age to finish a bird (6): 3. Celebration when fate is pronounced (4): 4. Self-expressive types (8): 5. Head branch (6): 6. Knotty marine hazard (4): 11. Hustling around in the daytime (8): 13. Odd number (8): 15. One result of eavesdropping in winter (6): 17. He must often work when others are playing (6): 19. Refusal to start on time (4): 21. Experiment with cricketers? (4):

**Word Spiral**

1. Hairless  
2. Dreary  
3. Inter  
4. Egg part  
5. Flying toy  
6. Egress  
7. Ballerina's skirt  
8. Unsightly  
9. Scream  
10. Turkish currency  
11. State or affirm  
12. Desire  
13. In this place  
14. Every  
15. Injured  
16. Ruffian

Keyword clue: A country

**Sudoku - Hard**

1. 9 6 2 4  
2. 7 5  
3. 2 3 6  
4. 8 1 9  
5. 4 5  
6. 5 3 4  
7. 6 8 9  
8. 6 7 4  
9. 1 5 6 7

**Sudoku - Easy**

1. 7 8 6 9  
2. 3 4 7 1  
3. 5 2 1 8  
4. 9 6 5 1  
5. 4 2 3 8  
6. 1 7 9 6  
7. 8 3 2 4  
8. 6 5 7 3  
9. 2 4 1 5

**Battleships**

1. Battleship  
2. Cruisers  
3. Destroyers  
4. Submarines

**Arrowword**

Mistake, Conflict within a state (5,3), Bird of prey, Type of fish, Aged, Greek letter, Court, Top card, Roberto ... fashion designer, Copy, Too, Assist a criminal, Cat's noise, Michele, Glee actress, High mountain, Chemist's workplace (abbr.), Agitate, Walkway, Choose



# Living in the now in Antigua

Proving sun, sea and sand benefit both body and soul, **Josie Clarke** learns how to live in the moment on a wellbeing trip to Antigua

**I** sink my toes into white sand, as the turquoise Caribbean Sea gently laps centimetres away. I have rum punch in my hand. Four days of this heaven stretch ahead. And then it happens. I'm thinking about, in no particular order, sewing name labels onto school uniforms, buying warming tablets for the dog, and the realisation I've left a bottle of wine in the freezer...

I've just lost precious minutes of this extraordinary experience. If not for the rum, I'd be absolutely furious. But this trip has a trick up its sleeve. I'm at the beautiful Galley Bay Resort & Spa in Antigua, to learn how to holiday properly. This means learning how to be in the moment – and staying there. For four days. And I achieve this through wholesome activities like yoga and sketching –

not by being permanently drunk on rum.

The Elite Island Resorts Group, a collection of beachfront locations in the Caribbean, offer activities designed to ensure every moment of your holiday is actually spent holidaying, with the help of relaxation and mindfulness skills that can be used back at home too.

There's colouring on the beach, Floatfit Caribbean classes and a catamaran to Pigeon Point, where we swim ashore and settle on the beach to sketch the view.

Dr Gehl suggests that once back home, we deal with stress by imagining "the feeling as a surfboard on which you're able to stand and ride it out". Perfect for when I get home, rescue the wine from the freezer, order the dog's tablets and get those name tags sewn on school uniform!



## FLIGHTS AND HOTELS

Josie Clarke was a guest of Hayes & Jarvis  
(01293 762 456;  
[www.hayesandjarvis.co.uk](http://www.hayesandjarvis.co.uk))

Spend a seven-night holiday at Galley Bay Resort & Spa in Antigua from £1,999pp including all-inclusive accommodation, transfers and return flights.

Flights from London Gatwick with Virgin Atlantic. Departs May 16, 2017.

Wellbeing activities also available at other Elite resorts. Visit [www.elite-islandresorts.com](http://www.elite-islandresorts.com)

To do: Visit Nelson's Dockyard and English Harbour, watch turtles, (June - Dec), see a steel band at Shirley Heights



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

## Do not betray our fishermen

I VERY much hope that representatives of the fishing industry [KoS, 05.02] are being unduly pessimistic concerning the future they will have once we have left the EU.

In the early 1990s, as a member of Ukip's NEC, I held meetings with fishermen's groups with a view to them supporting the cause of British independence and found them despairing of the effects Edward Heath's betrayal of their interests had had on their livelihoods, and enthusiastic for a clean break with Brussels.

At present we have the ridiculous situation where the UK has almost 70 per cent of Europe's fishing grounds but only 13 per cent of the EU's fishing quotas.

If they are not to be betrayed again we must withdraw totally from the Common Fisheries Policy and demand, as is our right under international law, the restoration of our 200 mile exclusive economic zone, including a 13 mile zone for UK fishermen, plus enforcing an end to destructive fishing practices by banning the factory ships from abroad anywhere in our waters.

Anything less would be to once again desert this hard working community in order to appease the unholy alliance of European bureaucrats and ideological green activists.

**Colin Bullen**  
 Tonbridge

## It's time to face facts and reality

ISN'T it time for a bit of reality to creep in?

Donald Trump is president of the US. The president is paying a visit to Britain.

Scotland voted to remain as part of Britain. Britain voted to leave the EU.

Jeremy Hunt is telling the NHS to save money at a time when thousands, if not several more millions of people are claiming 'free' NHS care.

The QEOM hospital had services and staff cut back in 2011.

Now many patients have to travel much further away for NHS outpatient care.

Secamb spend much more time taking 'emergencies' out of Thanet, so they are 'out of service' for the rest of us for very much longer.

Isn't it time for a bit more common sense to prevail?

**Betty Renz,**  
 Cliftonville

## Look who's back

IN reply to Edward Baker [KoS letter 05.02] I first point out that my

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Slowing down lorries would harm economy

CLIVE Wilkins-Oppler's letter in last week's KoS should not be allowed to go unchallenged.

To suggest that traffic being slowed down to 'farm tractor speeds' would be a desirable thing, is ridiculous. Indeed in some places on the road network it would be an offence.

From where did he obtain the information that so many speed related crashes occur on our highways that our arterial network is failing to deliver motorists punctually to their venue of choice?

Such an assertion is simply not supported by the facts.

Motorways are not just for cars, but very importantly, for goods vehicles too, many of which are running to 'timed delivery windows' that have to be hit and the fact is the great majority of the time they are.

On the rare occasions when there is a serious collision on a motorway it is inevitable that there will be traffic 'build-up' due to the sheer volume of vehicles on motorways at any given time.

Despite the fact they form only a fraction of the overall network, over 20 per cent of vehicle movement on any given day is taking place on motorways.

They play a vital role in the modern UK economy. Lorries carry over three times more of our goods round the UK than all the other modes of transport combined, much of that on our motorways and main arterial roads.

Statistically, rural roads are the most collision prone of the network - they account for over half of vehicle related deaths, compared to just five per cent on motorways, which mile-for-mile are the safest roads of the network.

That is why I also have to take issue with Mr Wilkins-Oppler when he states that so many crashes are 'speed related'.

The most common causes are not looking properly, or lack of care and attention.

**Christopher Hudson-Gool**  
 Maidstone

previous missive was itself in response to another correspondent covering several issues.

On climate change specifically though, Mr Baker tries to cloud the issue in my view with wide generalisation of the subject so I suggest to him and all that the new Ladybird, for adults, Intro to Climate Change, be obtained.

That said, whilst some of the records are fairly recent going back only to the late 18th/early 19th century, over the last several decades we have also been able to take and scientifically analyse information from such as ice-cores, seabed

sediments, chemical analysis of rocks, and those from archaeological and fossil record, to inform our view of ancient climates.

Thus we can say that the levels of CO2 in the atmosphere, put there by our own industrial activities over the last 150-200 years, have shown a rise from around 280 parts per million pre-industrial to just over 400 ppm worldwide today.

This heat retaining energy is what is driving the albeit fairly early signs of climate change via the increasingly intense weather events occurring around the world and leading the last 14 of 15 years being

not only the warmest since records began, but also known to be around the same as three million years ago in the Pliocene era.

During this era sea levels were also considerably higher than today, one example may be that just a few meters down from the top of The Bayle area at Folkestone, today 24 metres above the sea, is a gravel river bed layer which flowed into the much higher waters of that time.

Lastly here, he says the last ice-age lasted two million years, but this also wrong I'm afraid as there have been 20 such periods over the last three million or so years, the last one actually beginning only around 70,000 years ago.

Finally, whilst I welcome Mr Baker's comment being against uncontrolled greenhouse gas releases, the fact is that today we actually have to cut, probably drastically, the amounts we emit if we are to avoid going over the 2C rise by 2050 which has been set.

Sadly the advent of Trump in the US and that the Paris agreements are actually not stringent enough, we may be consigning our descendants to a rise of 3 or 4C by around 2100 unless much greater efforts are put in place!

**Ray Duff,**  
 Folkestone

## Is this the longest crossing delay?

VARIOUS Kent MPs have pressed the government to make an announcement on the Lower Thames Crossing but still we hear nothing.

Given all our representatives in Westminster are Conservatives, one would think their concerns would be heard by the government.

Yet a whole year has gone by since Highways England first launched its consultation into Option C and it's leaving our communities in a state of limbo.

Traffic at the existing crossing is a nightmare on a daily basis and the people of Dartford have suffered for far too long, with the removal of the tolls making the congestion even worse over the last couple of years.

Given this is a long-term project with several obstacles still to overcome, it's essential we get the ball rolling as soon as possible so our children don't have to suffer the way we have.

The government has repeatedly talked about investing millions of pounds in transport infrastructure.

It's all very well providing lip service, but we need to see something concrete - the people of north Kent want them to take action and they want them to do it now.

**J Watson,**  
 Greenhithe

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

**Kent on Sunday will:**

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to North & West

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

**We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.**  
[kent-life.co.uk](http://kent-life.co.uk) [kentnews.co.uk](http://kentnews.co.uk)





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**IMAGE:** It may be one for the fashion conscious, but the Ignis, at under £10,000 is a car with a serious challenge to securing your business



## Suzuki's stylish new Ignis wears well within budget

SUZUKI'S latest model continues the name Ignis – meaning 'fire' in Latin.

Admittedly, performance is no feistier than its two predecessors, but it will ignite interest with those who like to 'wear' their car.

I mean those whose cars are integral to their image; what I call the handbag/manbag sector and containing the MINI, Fiat 500, DS3 and others.

In that context, the Ignis is a winner, with funky on trend crossover/SUV styling, keen pricing from £9,999 – below the psychologically important £10k mark – and 11 colour schemes including two-tone treatments and many customisation options, easily added and even changed later by the dealer.

The SUV look is not just a nod to fashion either, as the Ignis can be had with Suzuki's ALLGRIP 4x4 system on the SHVS SZ5 flagship (£13,999).

Incidentally, SHVS stands for Smart Hybrid Vehicle by Suzuki, a neat add-on (from £12,999) available on two versions in the current Ignis line-up.

This does not mean that there is dual powertrain, as on conventional hybrids, but an ISG (integrated starter generator) that assists the car when pulling away and recovers energy from



braking, both helping to boost economy and cut emissions.

This gives SHVS Ignis models an official combined 65.7mpg and 97g/km of CO2.

All models come with the Japanese marque's punchy 90bhp 1.2-litre four-cylinder Dualjet petrol engine that appears in several other Su-

zuki; it suits the Ignis, with decent low down acceleration and enough overall fizz to make it fun to drive in all conditions.

The car is light yet substantial, well-arranged, and roomy too for something straddling the city car and supermini sectors. It even has flexible boot space thanks to sliding rear seat bases.



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**Model shown: Ignis SZ5 ALLGRIP at £13,999 on the road (metallic paint available from £465). Ignis range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 51.3 (5.5) to 57.6 (4.9), Extra Urban from 64.2 (4.4) to 70.6 (4.0), Combined from 60.1 (4.7) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO2 emissions from 106g/km to 97g/km.**

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect driving results. \*Free insurance offer: Excludes Ignis SZ3. UK residents aged 21-79 only. Order by 28 February 2017, register by 31 March 2017. Subject to availability. Offer only available when vehicle purchased through Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) by Suzuki Finance, available from participating Dealers, subject to status. Terms, exclusions & eligibility criteria apply, see [suzuki.co.uk/cars/ignis/freeinsurance](http://suzuki.co.uk/cars/ignis/freeinsurance), 5.9% APR representative on Suzuki Personal Contract Purchase. Maximum 49 month term. Terms and Conditions apply. The offer above is available from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. Finance is provided by Suzuki Financial Services Ltd (excludes Channel Islands and Isle of Man). Suzuki Financial Services Ltd reserves the right to withdraw or amend this offer without notice or prior warning. Suzuki Financial Services Ltd, part of Lloyds Banking Group, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff, CF10 5BH. Suzuki Insurance is provided by Original Insurance Services, registered in England and Wales No. 05686831 at Batchworth House, Church Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1JE and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. It is underwritten by Allianz Insurance plc, registered in England No. 84638 at 57 Ladymead, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1DB. Allianz Insurance plc is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No. 121849). Offer correct at time of going to print.

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# Korean coupe looks to be a cut above

Previous models were duds, but a World Rally Car connection adds to the allure of Hyundai's new sporting supermini option – the rakish and versatile i20 Coupe

**E**VEN Hyundai might privately admit that the original i20 supermini did not hit the ever-loftier heights touched by its other models of the past decade.

The second generation i20 (from £11,295) represents another big stride by the ambitious Korean brand in terms of style, comfort, quality, dynamics and powertrains.

Rather than blur the differences between five and three-door versions, Hyundai also chose to follow the trend towards designing the latter as a sporting coupe to deliver more glamour to the overall range.

If you need space then check out the stylish yet practical five-door model we tested at launch: it has one of the biggest boots in class.

But if you want sportier lines, still backed by Hyundai's generous five-year/unlimited mileage warranty, then check out the Coupe variant tested here.

For a start, there is a bit of an aura about the model that formed the basis for Hyundai's current WRC (World Rally Championship) challenge, though closer comparison between the donor car and the



snorting WRC version would show similarity is mostly only skin deep.

But the coupe is not just a cosmetic effort anyway; it has the all-round appeal of a practical supermini and, even with the space saver spare wheel, offers an impressive 311-litre

boot, expanding to 986 with seats down.

There's a good level of grip, decent body control on the bends and, but for a slight lack of steering feedback, it would be a real driver pleaser.

All the controls are well organised



too and cabin fit and finish, as now expected with Hyundai, is exemplary though the Korean brand does seem to favour durability above pleasing the eye or touch.

Rear legroom is good, but the cost of a rakish rear end is some dimin-

## Hyundai i20 Coupe Sport Nav 120PS

Price:	from £16,200
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Ford Fiesta

ished headroom and reduced vision out of the back windows.

But there's no criticism of the car's refinement and composure in a class where it can be a challenge; the i20 is quiet and rarely caught out by the vagaries of UK road surfaces;

Hyundai has advanced in leaps and bounds on the noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) front.

Of the engine choices, the test car's busy little three-cylinder 1.0-litre petrol turbo is the one to go for and, preferably the 120PS (118bhp) tune rather than 100PS (99bhp) version; a non-turbo 84PS 1.2 petrol is offered as an entry choice, but it doesn't have the oomph to go with the car's looks.

Alas, it would have been a travesty to offer the sensible diesel engine available to five-door i20 models.



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**LICENSING ACT 2003****NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I HARRY THOMAS CHAMBERLAIN HALL of 1 Wellfield Road, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2PJ have applied to Shepway District Council to vary the Premises Licence (Licence Number SHEP00339/05) - of Churchills, 1 - 3 Harbour Way, Folkestone, Kent CT2 1NA. The proposed variations are summarised as follows:

1. To extend the hours for all licensable activities save for late night refreshment permitted by the licence until 0200 hours on Friday and Saturday of each week.
2. To permit recorded music as specified in the application to be provided within the premises from 1800 hours until 0200 hours on Friday and Saturday of each week.
3. To extend the Opening Hours of the premises and the hours for the supply of Late Night Refreshment on Friday and Saturday of each week until 0300.

- For the premises Churchills situated at 1 - 3 Harbour Way, Folkestone, CT21NA.

A Register of Licensing Applications can be inspected at the offices of Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2QY - (www.shepway.gov.uk) Any person wishing to submit representations to the application must give notice in writing to the address shown above giving in detail the grounds of objection by the Eleventh day of March 2017.

It is an offence for anyone knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with a Licence Application. The maximum fine on summary conviction is £5,000. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one of the Four Licensing Objections; the Prevention of Crime and Disorder; Public Safety; the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Signed GIRLINGS Solicitors for the Applicant  
16 Rose Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2UR

Dated 6th February 2017

**A2 TRUNK ROAD (NEAR EBSFLEET) TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS**

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited intends to make an Order on the A2 Trunk Road in the County of Kent, under Section 141(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order would be to authorise:-

- a) the phased overnight closure of;
  - i) both carriageways of the A2 between Bean Interchange (B255) and Pepper Hill Interchange (B262);
  - ii) the roads leading to and from both carriageways of the A2 at Springhead Interchange (B259);
  - iii) the road connecting the eastern roundabout at Springhead Interchange (B259) to the B262 at Pepper Hill Interchange (B262);
  - iv) the road leading to the London-bound carriageway of the A2 at Pepper Hill Interchange (B262); and
  - v) the road leading to the coast-bound carriageway of the A2 at Bean Interchange (A296/B255); and
- b) the 24-hour closure of the lay-by adjacent to the road described in a) v) above.

These measures would be in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake resurfacing, inlays/overlays, road marking, stud replacement, detector loops maintenance, drainage, lighting, electrical and associated work.

It is expected that the work would last for approximately 9 weeks starting on or after Monday 6th March 2017. The overnight closures would take place between 20:00 and 06:00 (maximum period).

The Order would come into force on 4 March 2017 and have a maximum duration of eighteen months.

Traffic affected by the closures would be diverted using other junctions on the A2, the A226, A296, A2260, B255 and B262. The diversion in operation would vary according to the closure in force.

The temporary closures and diversion routes would be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co. Ltd.  
Ref: HE/SE/2017/A2/25

Highways England Company Limited,  
(Company No. 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

For enquiries, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk. <http://www.highways.gov.uk>

**MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009****BOTTOM TOWED FISHING GEAR (PROHIBITED AREAS) BYELAW 2017**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority intends to apply to the Minister for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation of a Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw 2017 to prohibit the use of all types of bottom trawl in specified areas to protect the designated features of those areas and therefore prevent damage to or deterioration of the site. This byelaw will now include areas within Margate and Long Sands SCL and will replace the existing Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw.

During the period of 28 days from the date of the publication of this Notice a copy of the Byelaw and Impact Assessment will be deposited at the offices of the applicant, at the address given below and at [www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk).

Objections or representations concerning this notification should be made within 28 days of the date of this notice to both addresses given below:

Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team  
Marine Management Organisation  
Lancaster House  
Hampshire Court  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7YH  
or [ifcabelaws@marinemangement.org.uk](mailto:ifcabelaws@marinemangement.org.uk)

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
Paragon House  
Albert Street  
Ramsgate  
Kent  
CT11 9HD  
or [info@kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:info@kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk)

**Licensing Act 2003  
Application to Swale Borough Council for a New Premises Licence**

Name of Applicant: MUSA KIVRAK,  
Premises: Tacos Locos, 67 High Street Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4AW  
proposed licensable activities: Sale by retail of alcohol for consumption on and off premises and Recorded Music Sunday to Thursday 11:30hours to 24:00hours Friday and Saturday 11:30hours to 02:00hours the following day. Date to make representations by: 27th February 2017. The licensing applications can be inspected by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday. Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department, Swale Borough Council, Swale House East Street Sittingbourne Kent ME10 3HT. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000. T483376

**Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence**

Steve Wilson and John Wilson T/A Wilson Tarmac of Heiland Glen Farm, Love Lane, Headcorn, Ashford, TN27 9HL is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an operating centre to keep 4 goods vehicles and 4 trailers at Abbey Wood, Stud Farm, Love Lane, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9HJ.

To add an operating centre to keep 4 goods vehicles and 4 trailers at Homestall Farm, High Halden, Ashford, Kent TN26 3BS.

Owners and occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS96NF, stating the reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

**Licensing Act 2003  
PUBLIC NOTICE****Application for a premises licence variation**

Name of Applicant: Thayalini Nanthakumar  
Premises: Forget Me Nots - Unit 2, Warden Bay Road, Leysdown, Kent, ME12 4NA

**Current Licensable activities:**

Sale of Alcohol & Opening Hours Monday - Saturday 08.00 - 23.00 Sunday 10.00 - 22.30 Good Friday 08.00 - 22.30 Christmas Day 12.00 - 15.00 & 19.00 - 22.30

**Proposed Variations:**

Change the name of the premises to Sun and Mirror Convenience Store and proposal of sale of alcohol Mon - Sun 06:00 - 23:00 All bank holidays/ Christmas Day/New Year's Eve/New Year's Day 06:00 - 23:00

**Date of Notice: 3rd March 2017**

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne Kent, ME10 3HT. Objections must be received within 28 days of the date of this notice.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**, in accordance with the provisions of s.53 (2) & 70(3) (a)(b) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976 HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that the fees chargeable under the above for the grant of hackney carriage and private hire vehicle, driver licences and private hire operator licences, together with additional costs appertaining to such licences, are proposed to be varied from 10 April 2017 as below:-

	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
<b>Dual Driver Licence (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire)</b>		
On initial application	£234 for three years	£239 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£278 for three years	£283 for three years
On renewal	£198 for three years	£202 for three years
Disclosure Barring Service search fee	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service	£44 every three years or £13 per year if they sign up to the DBS online service
Total (including DBS fee)	£242 for three years	£246 for three years
<b>Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence</b>		
On initial application	£359 for one year (which includes £30 towards the Unmet Demand Survey)	£366 for one year (which includes £30 towards the Unmet Demand Survey)
On renewal	£341 for one year (which includes £30 towards the Unmet Demand Survey)	£348 for one year (which includes £30 towards the Unmet Demand Survey)
<b>Private Hire Operator Licence</b>		
On initial application - 5 year licence	£493 for five years	£503 for five years
On renewal - 5 year licence	£487 for five years	£497 for five years
On initial application - 3 year licence	£325 for three years	£332 for three years
On renewal - 3 year licence	£310 for three years	£316 for three years
On initial application - 1 year licence	£180 for one year	£184 for one year
On renewal - 1 year licence	£165 for one year	£170 for one year
<b>Private Hire Vehicle Licence</b>		
On initial application	£328 for one year	£333 for one year
On renewal	£310 for one year	£315 for one year
<b>Other Costs</b>		
Change of licensed private hire vehicle (where there is more than six months left from the original licence)	£218	£222
Change of licensed hackney carriage vehicle (where there is more than six months left from the original licence)	£249	£254
Change of ownership of licensed vehicle	£69	£69
Change from Hackney Carriage to Private Hire	£70	£70
Change from Private Hire to Hackney Carriage	£90	£90
Replace external vehicle plate	£23	£23
Replace driver badge	£9.50	£10
Replace vehicle plate holder	£18	£18
Replace internal plate holder	£1.75	£1.75
Attempting "Knowledge Test" after two failures	£50	£50
Door transfers PHV only (per transfer)	£7.70	£7.70
Copy of existing paper licence	£11	£12
Change of address details for a replacement licence	£11	£12
Change of name for a vehicle or operator licence	£11	£12
Change of name and address for a driver badge	£20	£21
Vehicle exemption certificate or general administration fee	£44	£45
<p>● Hackney carriage vehicles are subject to additional fee of £30 for demand survey. However a change of vehicle where the expiry date remains the same as the original licence will not be charged this fee.</p> <p>● Insurance plates - where a plate has been issued for a year to an Accident Management Company (Cab Aid etc.). A reallocation of the vehicle to a different driver will necessitate a change of plate number. (for example, originally INS 123 but on reallocation becomes INS 678)</p>		

A copy of this Notice shall, for a period of twenty-eight days from the date of first publication, be available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk) and at the Gateway 8 Grosvenor Road Tunbridge Wells.

Any objections to the proposal to vary the fees must be made by 10 March 2017 via the Licensing Partnership Licensing P.O. Box 182 Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1GP email [licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

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# Cowdrey: I wish Cook had stayed

Former England captain dissects a dramatic week in cricket

## Cricket

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

FORMER England and Kent captain Chris Cowdrey has warned Joe Root stepping up to skipper the national side will be a "big leap up mentally", as the 25-year-old emerged as the hot favourite to replace Alastair Cook.

Cook quit earlier this week after a four-and-a-half stint in command, leading England in 59 Tests and two Ashes victories.

At 32 he is England's most-capped Test captain as well as their most prolific batsman, scoring 11,057 runs in 140 Tests.

But his decision to leave has left the smart money on the young Yorkshireman now taking over.

And while Cowdrey believes he has captain potential, he fears it may have come a little too soon and rues Cook's decision to quit now.

Speaking to KoS this week, the 59-year-old - who captained England, albeit briefly, in 1988 - said: "I'd choose Joe Root - but not now.

"I hoped Cook would do another two years or at least get through this difficult year which is ahead.

"We've got the ICC Champions Trophy, South Africa and the West Indies touring here and then off to Australia on an Ashes tour.

"To ask Root to play all that and captain, assuming he gets appointed, is a big ask. It is a big leap up mentally; is he up to the job, can he handle the media attention, can he keep his form? I hope he can because he's a wonderful player.

"It used to be that you would rise up and captain your county first but



**OFF:** Alastair Cook resigned this week as England captain

Picture: PA

now the captain is selected from the England dressing room. But I hope he'll do very well."

Cook's last series as captain was the 4-0 defeat to India late last year. He said: "I've had time to reflect after the India series. I spoke to Colin Graves, the chairman, to explain and offer my resignation. Playing for Eng-

land really is a privilege and I hope to carry on as a Test player."

Cowdrey, son of cricket legend Colin and father of Kent star Fabian, retired from the professional game in 1992. Next month he embarks on a theatre tour with best friend David Gower, including a date in Tunbridge Wells (see leisure pages for more).

## N'Gala saga continues as Dover sign defender

## Football

A DEFENDER who signed for Gillingham last week, but then left the club after bosses discovered he was ineligible to play, has now joined Dover Athletic.

The Gills announced that former West Ham academy graduate Bondz N'Gala had joined the club's ranks, but a change in regulations meant the defender was unavailable to appear at Priestfield.

Unbeknown to both Gillingham and the Football League (EFL), Fifa, football's governing body, modified their rules and regulations regarding player appearances and contracts for the 2016/17 season.

The new law lists National League sides as professional clubs, and as a



**CONTROVERSY:** Bondz N'Gala

result, players are only permitted to make competitive appearances for a maximum of two teams they are

contracted to during any one campaign.

As a result of N'Gala playing for both Barnet in League Two and National League side Eastleigh earlier in the season, Gillingham were unable to field their new man.

However, Dover announced this week they had completed the signing of the powerful 27-year-old and there appear to be no barriers to him appearing at Crabble.

A club statement read: "Following discussions between Dover Athletic, the FA and the EFL it was confirmed by the FA's registrations department that we could go ahead and sign the player."

N'Gala has previously featured for Scunthorpe, Plymouth, Yeovil, Stevenage, Portsmouth and MK Dons.

Sport **Shorts** » Email [sports@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:sports@kosmedia.co.uk) or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

## Fleet boss McMahon scoops manager gong

EBBSFLEET United boss Daryl McMahon this week scooped the National League South Manager of the Month award for January.

The manager guided his Fleet to four wins out of four in the league in a tough programme that included fellow promotion rivals Dartford, Chelmsford City and Poole Town as well as a tricky away tie at Wealdstone.

A National League spokesman said: "Whilst the Fleet, like others in the Vanarama South current play-offs positions are all striving to catch leaders Maidenhead United, if any club is to claw back the deficit then the Kent club does have the infrastructure in place on and off the field to make it.

"January has thrown up a number of difficult games and Daryl this time around knows that his squad must hit the ground every month if the target of promotion is to be achieved come season end.

"A 100 per cent league record in the month has been a very creditable platform." **WINNER:** McMahon (right)



**RACE:** The scene at the 29er Winter Championships

## Swale sensation sails to junior team victory

SWALE'S teenage sensation, Morgan Archer, has proved his credentials in a 29er sailing dinghy, winning a junior team first.

The Abbey School pupil, 15, who has represented Great Britain in the one-person Topper Class, has just returned from the 29er Winter Championships at Draycote Sailing Club, near Rugby.

The contest took place last

weekend on Draycote water reservoir and Morgan said he and crew member Hakan Digby, 14, both ex-national RYA topper squad sailors, used the knowledge they had gained in the squad to help their pre-race planning.

The pair finished as the top junior team and eighth overall in the mixed, eight-race contest, which included under-16, youth and adults.

## Hawkins sees off Robertson test

DITTON potter Barry Hawkins saw off Neil Robertson in impressive fashion with a 4-2 win over the Australian at the World Grand Prix in Preston.

Hawkins took the lead in the quarter-final with a break of 81, Robertson levelled but Hawkins took the next two in scrappy circumstances.

The Kent star then missed a

chance to settle the match in the fifth frame, and Robertson replied with a frame-winning run of 51, but he made no mistake in the sixth, securing victory with an 85 break.

"I finished off well, I needed to win that frame, as I've started to get a name for myself for collapsing after getting in front," he said afterwards.

The tournament concludes this weekend.

Keep up-to-date with all Kent's sports news via social media on:  
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